Heaven upon Earth:

OR, THE

BEST FRIEND

IN THE

WORST of TIMES.

Delivered in ſeveral Sermons,

By *JAMES JANEWAY*,

Miniſter of the GOSPEL.

The Third Edition *much Corrected and Enlarged.*

JOHN 15. *ver.* 15.

Henceforth I call you no more Servants,—— but Friends.

LONDON,

Printed by T. Milbourn, for D. Newman, at the *Kings-Armes* in the Poultry, the Corner of Grocers-Alley, MDCLXXI.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

When I conſider what a noble thing the Soul of Man is, the High end for which he was Made, and the great Account he is ſhortly to make to Him that made him, I cannot but wonder, That he who was made little lower than the Angels, ſhould make himſelf little better than the Beaſts.

The great and dreadful God hath taken much pains to reduce the Inhabitants of London, *and indeed all the Nation to the Obedience of his Son. He hath been pleading with poor* England *of late in ſuch a manner, as is ſcarce to be parallel'd in*

fore-going Ages; he hath left the print of his Fingers behind him, and written divine diſpleaſure in Black Letters.

The Righteous Judge began his Circuit in London, *and in that one City, above one Hundred Thouſand received the Sentence of Death from his Juſt Tribunal.*

That was not quite Remov'd before another Amazing Judgment was ſent to ſucceed it. The Voyce of the Lord was not heard, the Language of the Plague was not underſtood; wherefore the dreadful Jehovah *ſpake Louder, and Louder, as he did once from Mount* Sinai, *in Fire, Flame, and Smoak; he rode upon the Wings of the Wind, he rode in a Chariot of Flaming Fire, whilſt the Bells did Ring their own Knells, as they were Tumbling; and it's to be feared, were more melted at the Anger of the Mighty God, than Thouſands of Hard harted Men and Women were. The Leads of the Churches were Diſſolved into ſhowers more eaſily far than ſtupid Profeſſors, that were wont to ſit under them. That was a Black Cloud indeed which no Wind could blow over, till it fell in ſuch Scalding Drops.*

Theſe

Theſe things Conſidered, I hope it will not be unwelcome, nor unſeaſonable, if I put you upon looking out for ſuch a Friend as will provide ſufficiently for his under all theſe Straits, *and prove the* Beſt in the Worſt of Times. *He knows* Job *upon the Dunghil, as well as* David *upon the Throne; he will be moſt Kind when others are moſt Unkind; he will Viſite you, when others will ſcarce Look upon you. In his Houſe you ſhall be as welcome as ever. There are many Manſions, if it were not ſo, he would have told you. In this City there is Room enough, and you ſhall have Entertainment, &c. be more Welcome than if you had ſtayed away: His Doors will be open to them who have no Houſes to hide their Heads in. Come to him ye Harberleſs ones, he Invites you Earneſtly and Heartily, &c. He will give you Shelter, you that have no Friends, or but ſorry ones. Come to him now in your Straits, and he will never caſt your Poverty, or his Kindneſs in your Teeth; except your Carriage be Proud, and unbecoming your State. God hath lately read us a Lecture of the Vanity of all Creature Enjoyments, And will you after this*

refuſe Acquaintance with Him, who will be better to you than a thouſand of the beſt friends that ever man had upon Earth?

I have in the following Book given you Directions how you may come to be Acquainted with Him.

As God appointed Cities of Refuge, ſo he gave expreſs Command, that the way to them ſhould be made Plain, Fit, and Broad: And therefore the Meſſengers work every Year was to Remove all Stumbling-Blocks, and Offences. They ſuffered not any Hill or Dale to be in the way, and at the partition of wayes, they ſet up in writing, Refuge, Refuge, *That the* Purſued *might have notice what way to take upon every turn,* Deut. 19. 2, 3.

The like I haved endeavoured in this enſuing Diſcourſe, to make the Way to this Bleſſed Friend Plain and Familiar. Pray for a Bleſſing upon it, which coſt the Author ſome Pains, Prayers, Tears, and Groans; That what was here written might be the Tranſcript of his own Experience, and might be ſome way ſubſervient to the Glory of God in the Converſion and Comfort of Souls. If you find any good in the uſe of this Book,

give

give God the Praiſe, and labour to keep a conſtant warm ſence of the Excellency of ſuch a Friend upon your Spirits, and commend this Friend to all your Relations and Acquaintance; that none of them after great Loſſes, may loſe God, Heaven, and themſelves too. O that will be a Dreadful Loſs indeed! I again beſeech you; forget not to Pray for one of the moſt unworthy inſtruments that ever Infinite Goodneſs made uſe of in ſo glorious a Work:

James Janeway.

July 20.
1669.

HEAVEN
UPON
EARTH.

Job 22. 21.

Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at Peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee.

THey who have improved their experience of things by Wiſdom, and gathered up the value of mans life, by comparing his deſire with his Enjoyments, his Troubles and Sorrows with his Content and Joy, have concluded the worth of the life of man to be below nothing; they have drawn a black line upon the whole, and ſhut up all in darkneſs. Thus *Jacob* of old in the account which he gives of his life to *Pharaoh*, Gen. 47. 9. & *Job* 5. 7. And alſo *Solomon*, who had an extraordinary meaſure of wiſ-

dom by Divine diſpenſation, who had a large ſpirit like the Sand of the Sea-ſhore, he gave himſelf great liberty in trying what that *good under the Sun* for the ſons of men was, *Eccleſ.* 2. 1. When he had taken a taſte of all the worlds Contents, yet he finds a bitterneſs mixed in all delights, which abideth no longer then the pleaſure *verſ.* 11, & 17. And whoſoever ſhall enter into himſelf, and feel the workings of his own mind, ſhall be able to read over the Tranſcript of the ſame in his own Conſcience. Who is he among the ſons of men, that in his Natural life hath attained to a ſtate wherein he was able to ſay, *Here I will ſtay, it is now well with me, I deſire no addition to my preſent condition?* If there be any ſuch, I dare undertake to prove him unacquainted with himſelf. Where now ſhall I faſten the blame of this univerſal evil? Shall we fall out with our life, as a thing not worth the having? Shall we ſhrink unto our former nothing, and caſt up our being and life into the hands of God, as that out of which we gathered nothing but bitterneſs and diſquiet? Far be this from us, this were to juſtifie that evil and wicked ſervant, who ſaid of God, *That he knew he was a hard Maſter, reaping where he had not ſown, and gathering where he had not ſtrawed.* This would be to accuſe God of having made us to an unavoidable neceſſity of miſery. How then comes it to paſs, that we are all held faſt in this common calamity? It is from thy ſelf, O man, it is from thy ſelf; this evil is becauſe of our falling from God. It is a Righteous thing with God, that when man departed from him, he ſhould reap the Fruit of his own doings; and indeed it is impoſſible for a creature of our compo-

ſure

ſure and conſtitution, but to feel it ſelf diſſatisfied with all worldly material employments, and to find trouble and diſquiet in it ſelf, while it is deprived of its true good. If we would have a true account of our diſquiet and diſſatisfaction, this it is. God made man of all the works of his hands, to be the neareſt to himſelf, and hath fitted his principles for a higher life, then that which hath the things of this world for its object; but man hath made himſelf like the Beaſts that periſh. We have given our ſouls into captivity to our bodies, or rather, we are fallen from our Union with God, and are gathered up into our ſelves, and become deprived of a ſufficiency in ſeparation from God; then it muſt needs be, that we being gone down into a lower ſtate than that which we were made to, ſhould find nothing but diſſatisfaction and emptineſs; here we are by nature, and hitherto we have brought our ſelves by forſaking God.

Now the great inquiry will be, what Remedy there is for this our woful condition; is there any way whereby we may be delivered from this miſery? if there be, what way is it? Theſe words which I have choſen to ſpeak to, do contain the Anſwer to this Inquiry.

Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee. This is the counſel of one of *Job*'s three friends to him in the time of his great affliction. You have heard of the affliction of *Job*, and how his three friends came to relieve him with their Counſel; but the Devil who had a Commiſſion from God to try his utmoſt with *Job*, yet ſparing his life, made uſe of his friends, who are to be a comfort in the hour

of adverſity, to be a great means of his diſquiet, ſo that he cries out of them, *Miſerable comforters are ye all*, Chap 16. 2. And the great way of their troubling him was, by miſ-applying, by making falſe application of true principles. In their Diſcourſes there are many excellent Truths; yet by their hard conſtruing, & ungrounded condemning of him, they by God are reproved, as not having ſpoken the thing that was right, *Chap.* 41. 7. yet in many things their counſel was ſuitable, and ſeaſonable, of which ſort, the words in the Text may be accounted. In this Chapter *Eliphaz* had been inquiring into the cauſe of *Job*'s great affliction, and holding this for an undeniable Principle, that the righteous God, being the great diſpoſer of affliction, did bring this evil upon him becauſe of his ſin; he meaſured the greatneſs of his ſins, by the greatneſs of his afflictions; he made account, becauſe Gods hand was gone forth in an extraordinary manner againſt *Job*, therefore there was ſome extraordinary guilt upon him, *verſ.* 5. & 13. *And thou ſayeſt, How doth God judge through the dark clouds?* Thus we have his apprehenſion of *Job*, as one under great affliction, becauſe of his great ſins; and the Text is *Eliphaz* his counſel to *Job*, under this character; and ſo is ſuitable advice to thoſe that are under ſickneſs, or great afflictions, and that are under the guilt of great ſin.

Acquaint thy ſelf with him, and be at peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee. The words are a Doctrine for the ſoul under a ſenſe of its loſt condition, with a Promiſe very comfortable upon the embracing thereof.

The Doctrine is, *Acquaint thy ſelf with him, and be at peace.*

The

The Promiſe: *Thereby good ſhall come unto thee.*

Theſe words, *Be at peace*, may be referred either to the former, as an addition to the Doctrine, *Be at peace*; that is, keep your ſelves in a quiet ſubmiſſion to the hand of God; or to the latter, and ſo *be at peace*, is as much as, *peace ſhall be to thee.*

In the Doctrine we are to conſider the *Act*, and *Object.*

The Act, *Aquaint.*

The Object is *God.*

DOCTRINE.

So that the *Doctrine* is, *To enter into acquaintance with God.* This Propoſition ſtands forth to the view of every eye, that it is the Duty of man to be *acquainted with God,*

Now the firſt thing that is before us to require after, is, What this *acquaintance with God is.*

Secondly, to evidence and clear it to be the Duty of man to *acquaint himſelf with God.* Acquaintance with God implyes ſeveral things.

1. It ſignifies a full and determinate knowledge of this Truth, that there is a *God*, and ſo to know him, as to his Nature, diſtinct from all other *beings.*

There is a three-fold Knowledge of God.

1. *A Rational.*
2. *A Natural.*
3. *A Supernatural.*

Firſt, there is a *Rational knowledge of God*, which is a clear diſcovery of an Almighty, All-ſufficient Cauſe of all things, which is attained by a Reaſonable diſcuſſing Power of the Soul, which argueth from things that are viſible and ſenſible

to an inviſible and ſelf-principled Cauſe of all things. Man found himſelf brought into the world furniſhed with an innumerable variety of Creatures, and none of theſe having power to make it ſelf; we ſee likewiſe ſuch an accurate order in every particular Creature; and in all the Creatures one with another, that we cannot but ſee clearly that there is a Supream Almighty Cauſe of all things, who hath by his power, brought forth all things into being: who is likewiſe the moſt wiſe Agent, who by his unſearchable wiſdom, hath curiouſly framed every Creature, and by his wonderful counſel hath ſet them in ſuch an order, that they all ſerve one another, till at length they all meet in man, as in the common center.

Secondly, there is a *Natural knowledg* of God, which is the inward touch, and mental ſenſation of a Supream Righteous Judge, to whoſe trial we feel our ſelves under an unavoidable bond, in doing *good* and *evil*. This is that which is commonly called *Conſcience*: this a man finds in himſelf if at any time he have committed any ſecret ſin whatſoever, which none in the world knows but himſelf: he feels it to be a preſſure upon his ſpirit, as being under the examination of a power ſuperior to himſelf. Now this is nothing elſe but a ſecret impreſſion that God hath made of himſelf upon the minds of Men, by which man is bound to ſtand before the Tribunal of God. Theſe two ways of knowing of God were very clear to man in his perfect ſtate, but ſince the fall of man they are much weakened, and decayed. But,

Thirdly, There is a *ſupernatural* way whereby

by we come to know God which hath repaired our loſs by *Adams* ſin, and that is by Gods extraordinary Revelation of himſelf in his holy Scriptures: by theſe we may come to have a more clear diſtinct knowledge of God, both that he is, and what he is. To theſe three ways of letting in the knowledge of God into the ſoul, three mental Acts of the ſoul do anſwer.

Firſt, A Rational Diſcourſe, by which we find out God by the Creatures.

Secondly, An inward ſenſation, which feels God as juſt in good and evil.

The Third mental Act is Faith, which for its Foundation hath the Word of God.

There is a Fourth way of knowing God which is by experiment; which is when God manifeſts himſelf to his peculiar ones, and lets out the knowledge of himſelf to their Souls; as when the Sun breaks forth with a bright ſhining in a cloudy day: but this belongeth rather to another head.

Thus you ſee the firſt thing imployed in this *acquaintance with God*, which is the loweſt.

Yet how many are there that have little *acquaintance with God* in theſe ſigns? May we not come to many who profeſs they know God, and yet among all their thoughts, they have had few or none to ſatisfie themſelves concerning him? How groſs are the apprehenſions of ſome concerning God? Some men reſiſt and ſtifle that *Natural knowledge* that they have of God, ſuch as thoſe, *Rom.* 1. 20. they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and God gave them over to a Repeobate mind, or a mind void of judgment, as the word ſignifies. Others have lived all their

days upon the bounty and goodneſs of God, and yet have not been led by the ſtreams to the Fountain, from which all hath flow'd. Others can buſie themſelves all their time in other things, and little inquire into the word of God, by which they may be led to the knowledge of him; *But woe to thoſe on whom the fury of the Lord ſhall be poured out, becauſe they know not God.* Jer. 10. 23.

Secondly, *Acquaintance with God*, implyes frequent acceſs unto God. We do not uſually reckon our ſelves acquainted with any perſon, by a bare knowledge that ſuch a perſon there is, and that we are able to give ſome General Deſcription of him; but when we ſay we are acquainted with any, it is underſtood that we have been in ſuch a ones company, we have come to him, and been with him: ſuch is our acquaintance to be with God.

Under this Head I ſhall ſpeak, First, *Of that ſeparation that is of the ſoul from God.*

Secondly, *Of the return of the ſoul to God.*

Thirdly, *Of the abiding of the ſoul with God.*

First, Of the *ſeparation and diſtance of the ſoul from God.* That corrupted eſtate in which every man comes into the world, is a ſtate of ſeparation from God. This diſtance is not to be underſtood as a Phyſical Natural Diſtance, for ſo God is near to every one of us by his Omnipreſence, & by his infinite Power, ſuſtaining us in our being and actions, *Acts* 17. 27, 28. *Though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, move, and have our being.* But this is to be underſtood,

First, *Of a moral ſeparation from God.* There is a great ſtrangeneſs between our ſouls and God: we reckon our ſelves to have little to do with him,

him, and to be very remotely concerned in him; we reckon that God takes very little regard of us, we look upon God as far from us, & we think God looks upon us as at a great distance; we love not God, and think that God loves not us.

Secondly, This *separation* may be understood of a *Judicial Distance*, at which God hath set sinful man from himself. Man is kept out from God, as being unfit to approach to him in his sinfulness and impurities, and that is either in this life, in which condition every one is, *till he be made nigh by Christ, and set before the Father without sin in him; till they are born again of the Spirit, & justified, and sanctified by Christ*, Ephes. 2. 13. *Ye that sometimes were afar off, were made near by the blood of Christ.* Here this Judicial separation is the execution of that terrible sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, Mat. 25 41. Thus ye see the Distance at which man is from God, which is not Physical, but either Moral or Judicial.

Secondly, When we are thus separated from God, if we will be *acquainted* with him, there is required a returning to God. *Acquaintance* doth necessarily imply an Union: Now where there was a former *separation* and *distance*, there is required a motion to compliance, and a return either in both parties, or in one at least; so that before ever we can be *acquainted with God*, there must be a forsaking our former distance, the separation must be removed. Now God hath done what could be conceived, and beyond what could be expected towards the reducing of us, to an union with himself; whereas he might justly gave thrust us away from him for ever, and never

have

have given us liberty to come near him more, as being ſo filthy by ſin, that his Holineſs cannot endure us: yet he hath freely ſet open a door of hope for our return: he did not come thus nigh to Angels when they fell, but they were turned away from him, and are bound in chains of darkneſs to the Judgment of the great day: it is impoſſible for them to return any more. And ſo it would have been for us, had not God made it poſſible by an Act of Free Love; and he hath likewiſe revealed his willingneſs to receive us if we return, yea, his earneſt deſire, *Turn ye, way will ye die?* Yea, his rejoycing in our return, as a Father rejoyceth to receive a prodigal Son that hath departed from him. But that God ſhould go further, to cloſe with us while we retain our impurities, and remain at a diſtance from him, it is impoſſible, becauſe of the unchangeableneſs and ſimplicity of his Nature, and becauſe of the purity and exactneſs of his Holineſs; it muſt therefore neceſſarily follow, that a yielding and return muſt be on our parts, or elſe there is no poſſibility of compliance between God and us, after that we have forſaken him by ſin. And this is moſt righteous and equal; for man did forſake God, God did not forſake man; man made the difference; man ran away from God: God follows man as far as his Holineſs and Unchangable naturn will permit him; he calls to us to return, he is ready to meet and imbrace us in the arms of his Love, and to receive us into acquaintance with himſelf, as the Father in the Parable met his prodigal Son, Luke 15.20. *He ſaw him afar off, & had compaſſion on him, ran and fell upon his neck and kiſſed him.* Herein have we

ſhadowed

ſhadowed out to us the great readineſs of God to receive returning ſinful man; but as the Prodigal Son muſt return to his Father, ſo man muſt return to God. Now it is ſin that ſeparates between us and God, and keeps good things from us, *Iſa.* 59.2. *Your iniquity hath ſeparated between you and your God, and your ſins have hid his face from you:* Therefore while we cleave to our ſins, we are ſeparated from God: till we are ſeparated from our ſins, we cannot be united to God. Thus ye ſee our ſeparation from God, and our neceſſity of returning to God, before there can be any acquaintance with him.

Thirdly, *To our acquaintance with God,* is required an abiding with God. We reckon not our ſelves acquainted with any perſon upon the firſt meeting, or when there hath paſſed but a word or two between us; but it is ſuppoſed to acquaintance, that we have made a conſiderable ſtay with him; and have had frequent acceſs to him. Thus it is between God and us: we muſt not only come to him, but abide with him, or elſe we ſhall never be acquainted with him, *Joh* 8.13. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples.* So I ſay, if you return to God, and continue with God, then ſhall ye be acquainted with him indeed. *Acquaintance,* ſignifies not a bare Act, but a State or Habit. Now this is the difference between an Act and a State; that an Act is paſſing and is gone; but a State ſignifies an abiding and continuance. There may be a drawing nigh to God, without abiding and continuing with God, upon ſome deep Conviction, or ſtrange providence, or eminent danger; as it is ſaid, *In their affliction, they will ſeek me early.*

Yet

Yet they may ſoon forget and forſake God. This is but a ſeeming and practical approaching to God, a drawing nigh in appearance, when the heart is far from God: but that approaching to God which makes acquaintance with God, is abiding with him. Thoſe that are acquainted with a ſpiritual life know theſe things what they are, and that they are the greateſt realities in the world; they know that ſometimes there is a greater neatneſs of their ſouls to God, they are ſenſible of the approaches of their heart to God; and of the withdrawing of their ſouls from God; they know what it is for the ſoul to feel the approaches of God, and his ſmiles fill their ſouls with unſpeakable Comfort: And to feel God withdrawing from the ſoul, this clouds their joy, and makes them go mourning: They can tell you at ſuch a time they were brought unto his Banquetting-houſe, and his Banner over them was Love: They can tell you at ſuch time Chriſt came into his Garden to eat his pleaſant Fruits; at ſuch a time they heard the voice of their Beloved, ſaying, *Open to me, my Siſter, my Spouſe, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled.* And when the ſoul hath neglected this knock of Chriſt to open to him, that then he hath withdrawn: *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone.* Theſe things are the experiences of a precious child of God, which I fear are little felt, and little known amongſt us: but where theſe things are not, there is no *acquaintance with God.* For,

Firſt, *They do know him.*

Secondly, *They draw nigh to him, they have near acceſs to him.*

Thirdly

Thirdly, *They have intimate Converſe with him.* This is another thing required to acquaintance. We are not ſaid to be acquainted with any perſon, unleſs we have had intimate converſe with him. We may be next Neighbours, and yet have no Acquaintance, unleſs our converſation hath been mutual. So it is between God and us; there may be a nighneſs between the Soul and God, and yet no Acquaintance between the Soul and God. We are nigh to God, in our dependance upon him, we are near to God by his immediate providence and ſuſtentation of us, and by his Omnipotence. There is a nearneſs to God by way of Dedication. As God ſet apart the Children of *Iſrael* to be a people near unto himſelf; ſo the viſible Church of God is nearer to him then thoſe that are not of the Church. There is a nearneſs of Dedication among us by Baptiſm. But all this may be without Acquaintance. There is therefore required to our Acquaintance with God, an intimate converſe with God. We have great converſe with thoſe who are of the Family, or ſociety with us. Now ſuch is our acquaintance with God, as thoſe who are of his Family. God is called the Father of the Families of all the earth: and the viſible Church is reckoned as Gods Family; but in a great Family there may be little Acquaintance with thoſe perſons which be of remote employments: but to acquaintance with God there muſt be ſuch a relation as implies familiar converſe. This intimacy that the people of God have to him, is expreſſed by the neareſt relations in Scripture. As *Abraham* is called *The Friend of God.* 2 Chron. 20. 7. *Jehoſhaphat* prayes unto God, and ſaith,

ſaith, *Art not thou our God, who didſt drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Iſrael, and gave it to the ſeed of* Abraham *thy friend for ever? And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his Friend,* Exod. 33. 11. John 15. 15. *Henceforth I call you not ſervants, but friends, for the ſervant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you Friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.* Now by *Friend* is commonly underſtood a ſtate of converſe and ſociety one with another. And this intimacy is expreſſed likewiſe by the relation of Husband and Wife, *Iſa.* 54. 5. *For thy Maker is thy Husband,* Hoſ 2. 7. *Then ſhall ſhe ſay, I will go and return to my Husband, for then was it better with me than now.* By *husband* there is meant *God.* And the whole Book of the *Canticles* is a relation of the mutual converſe betwixt God & his people, betwixt Chriſt and his Church, under the relation of a *Bridegroom* and his *Spouſe.* Now what converſe more intimate than between Husband and Wife? Such is that between a ſoul acquainted with God, and God. Again, this is ſhadowed out to us under the relation of a Father and his Children, 1 John 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of Love the father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called his ſons!* And the holy Spirit is given to be the Spirit of Adoption in the hearts of Gods people, *Rom.* 8. 15. 16. *Ye have received the ſpirit of Adoption, whereby ye cry, Abba, Father. The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God.* What is ſignified by this *Relation* but a nigh union and intimate converſe between the ſoul and God? And this is neceſſary to our acquaintance with God, even intimate converſe

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with God. By this I mean a nearneſs of employment, when the Objects of our employments are the ſame, then are we ſaid to converſe with God, when we are employed about thoſe things wherein God is moſt. When there is, as it were, a mutual commerce and trading between the ſoul and God; man giving himſelf up to God, and God giving himſelf out to man; man taking up the intereſt of God, and God undertaking for the intereſt of man: theſe & ſuch like actings are the converſe which the ſoul hath with God. I ſpeak of things which the men of the world are not acquainted with; but thoſe that are acquainted with God, know theſe things, and upon the mention of them, their hearts leap within them. As face anſwereth to face in a glaſs, ſo experience anſwereth theſe things. When this ſtring is ſtruck, their hearts do harmonize; as when a Lute-ſtring is ſtruck, the other ſtrings of nigheſt concord with it move alſo. But theſe things are a myſtery to the world, and they ſay as thoſe of Chriſts word, *We know not what he ſaith.* And it is no wonder, for they are the actings of a Divine life, to which all are naturally dead, till they are raiſed to newneſs of life by the quickning of the ſpirit of God. But I proceed to ſhew what is meant by this acquaintance with God.

Fourthly, To this Acquaintance with God, there is required a mutual Communication. Where there is acquaintance between man and man, there hath been a mutual Interchange of conference and diſcourſe. Thus when the ſoul is acquainted with God, there is an Interchange of conference between God and the ſoul. The ſoul openeth its wants, breaths out its complaints,

plants, ſpreadeth its neceſſities before God; God openeth the treaſures of his love in his Son, the rich Mynes of his precious Promiſes, and the ſecrets of his good Will to the ſoul. Thus *Pſal.* 25. 15. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* Gen 18. 17. *The Lord ſaith, ſhall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* Thoſe that are friends and acquaintance, they will let out their thoughts and purpoſes one to another, & they gave out themſelves mutually into communion one with another. Thus Chriſts knocks at the door of the ſoul, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me.* Here is Chriſt offering himſelf to the ſoul, & the ſoul is to entertain him; at another time the ſoul goes to God, and God entertains it; God hath promiſed that he will open, *Mat.* 7. 28. *Knock and it ſhall be opened unto you*; and to him that knocks it ſhall be opened. There are frequent actions among thoſe that are acquainted: And by theſe are expreſſed to us the acquaintance of the ſoul with God.

Now the Communications that are between the ſoul and God, are exceeding tranſcending all communications that are between mens acquaintance. Men may communicate their thoughts, their eſtates, their aſſiſtance to one another; but they cannot communicate their life, nor their nature, nor their likeneſs, but ſuch communications there are between God and the ſoul that is acquainted with him. All *being* is a communication from God the firſt *being*: nay, the ſeveral degrees of *being*, have ſeveral communicati-

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ons from God, ſome greater and ſome leſſer, ſpiritual *beings* have a higher communication then natural; but Gods higheſt communications have been to man in that myſtical Union of the Divine Nature to the Humane Nature in Chriſt, and next in the myſtical Union of the Sons of God to Chriſt, and in him to the Father. Thus Chriſt is ſaid to live in us, *Coloſ.* 2. 20. *I live*, ſaith *Paul*; *yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* Thus Chriſt prays the Father for his Children, that they may be one, *as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they be one in us*, Joh. 4. 17, 21. & Joh. 1. 15, 16. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *We are ſaid to be partakers of the Divine Nature.* This expreſſion implyes high communication of God to man. Again, there are high acts of communication from man to God (for though God receives not from man, yet man is to act as giving out himſelf to God;) ſuch as to give up the will to Gods will. As that of *Eli, It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* And that of *David*, 2 Sam. 15. 16. *If he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do with me as ſeemeth good unto him.*

Another act of high Communication of a mans ſelf to God, is parting with preſent enjoyments for future hopes, in confidence of Gods promiſe. Thus the Spirit of God works in the children of God a readineſs to forſake Father or Mother, and Brethren, and Siſter, and life it ſelf for the cauſe of God. Thus *John Baptiſt* was willing to become *Nothing*, that Chriſt might become *All*; to be caſt *down*, that Chriſt might be lifted *up*, Joh. 3. 13. *He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.*

Thus *Abraham* gives his *Iſaack* to dye when God calls for him. Thus *Moſes* eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of *Egypt*, Heb. 11. 26. *Paul* counted not his life dear for Chriſt, *Acts* 20. 24. Theſe have been the actings of the ſouls of thoſe that have been acquainted with God; and ſuch workings as theſe are the feeling of a child of God.

I have ſhewed you four things which are requiſite to acquaintance with God.

Firſt, Knowledg of God.

Secondly, acceſs to him.

Thirdly, Converſe with him.

Fourthly, Communication to him, and from him.

Fifthly, There is likewiſe required to acquaintance, a loving compliance. Amongſt men Acquaintance implyes Affection. And ſo it is between God and Man. Never any ſoul was acquainted with God, that did not love God; and ſuch a ſoul is an enemy to God; therefore very few are acquainted with God; but all that are not acquainted with God, are enemies to God. If we ſhould come to a perſon that is not acquainted with God, and ſay, Thou art an enemy to God; this would ſeem a heavy imputation: but I ſpeak it freely, thou, whoſoever thou art, that art not acquainted with God, thou art an enemy to God; for thou art ſtill as thou we'rt born: but we are all enemies to God according to our corrupt nature, and abide enemies till we come to be acquainted with God. Love to God, and acquaintance with God go together, are heightned by one another. Firſt, God lets into the ſoul by his Spirit a partial diſcovery of himſelf, and

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by this with the working of his Spirit, he incline the heart in love to him. Then on the first working of the soul towards God, he lets in a clear light, whereby he draweth the soul to a further degree of love. A clear place for this, *Ephes.* 3. 17,18. *And that being rooted and grounded in love, ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and heighth, and to know the love of God which passeth all understanding: that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* The love of God fits the soul to comprehend the glorious discoveries of God; and the discoveries of God, doth heighten our love to God. Acquaintance with God, makes us like unto God, as in *Joh.* 3. 2. *We shall see him as he is.* And our likeness to God, as it makes us the delight of God, so it makes us delight in God; for the cause of Complacency and Love is a likeness between the Lover and Beloved. God doth not love us with a love of complacency, till we are like him; nor do we love God, till we are made like God. Now our beholding God, and being acquainted with him, is a great way to our being made like to God, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Thus you see that love is likewise required to our acquaintance with God; without it no acquaintance.

I have in the first part, spoken of the Nature of acquaintance with God in five particulars. There must be,

First, A Knowledg of God.
Secondly, Nigh access to God.
Thirdly, Familiar converse with God.

Fourthly, Mutual communication between us and God.

Fifthly, An affectionate love towards God.

The next thing ſhould be to ſhew that man is to be acquainted with God; but we will firſt take a review of theſe things. We have taken theſe things into our underſtandings; now let us ſet our hearts to theſe things, for in theſe things is the life of Religion. If there be acquaintance with God, then groſs wickedneſs drops off, as ſcales from an ulcerated body, when the conſtitution of the body is mended. In acquaintance with God will be your only true comfort in this life; and the perfection of it, is the very happineſs of Heaven. Let us then behold, till our hearts earneſtly deſire, till our ſouls be drawn out after acquaintance with God. If God be to be known, to be approached unto, to be converſed with by me, will he communicate himſelf to me? and I my ſelf to him. Oh that he would love me, that I might love him! Oh bleſſed are they that know him, as they are known of him! It is good for me to draw nigh to him. *A day in his Court is better than a thouſand elſwhere. My ſoul longeth, ye fainteth for the Courts of the Lord. My heart and my fleſh cryeth out for the living God.* Oh that I were received into converſe with God! that I might hear his voice, and ſee his countenance, for his voice is ſweet, and his countenance comly! Oh that I might communicate my ſelf to God, and that he would give himſelf to me! Oh that I might love him! that I were ſick of Love! that I might die in love! that I might loſe my ſelf in his Love, as a ſmall drop in the unfathomleſs depth of his Love! that I might dwell in

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the eternal love of him! This is *acquaintance with God.*

Acquaint now therefore thy ſelf with God, and be at peace, ſo ſhall good come unto thee. We now proceed to the next thing, which is to evidence it to be the duty of man, to acquaint himſelf with God. This then is that into which the whole Scripture runs, as into a common Channel. The Scriptures are a diſcovery of Gods proceedings with man under a double Covenant, and this is the great deſign of God in both Covenants. The firſt Covenant was, *That while man did remain in obedience to God, God would give man free and intimate acquaintance with himſelf.* But if man became diſobedient, then he ſhould be diſpoſſeſſed of an intereſt in God, and of Communion with him; which was that death threatned upon the *eating the forbidden Fruit.* The death of the body is its being ſeparated from the Soul; but the death of the Soul, is in ſeparation from God. Now immediately upon *Adams* tranſgreſſion, man becomes unacquainted with God; ſo that upon the hearing of the voice of the Lord, *they hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden.* What a woful caſe is man naturally in? He hath loſt his acquaintance with God, and was in a way, never, never to recover it: upon Gods approach he flees. And ſuch is the nature of all ſin, it puts a man into a diſpoſition to greater ſins: Every departure from God inclines towards a greater. In the firſt Covenant this is the whole of it; it is both a command to keep nigh to God, and a promiſe of Gods being nigh to them, and a threatning of Gods putting them away far from him, man breaking the firſt

Covenant. The immediate effect of it was the ſin of fleeing from God, quite contrary to that acquaintance. Inſtead of their former apprehenſions of God, they ſeem to have forgotten his omnipreſence; inſtead of peace with God, they have nothing but dread and torment in the thoughts of God; inſtead of drawing nigh to God, they run away from him; inſtead of converſe with God, they chooſe never to have to do with him more; inſtead of giving themſelves up to God, they if it had been poſſible, would have hid themſelves from God. Acquaintance with God is the ſum of the firſt Covenant; unacquaintance with God is the miſery of the breach of the Covenant. This is likewiſe the great deſign and purpoſe of God in the ſecond Covenant. The ſecond Covenant is this: When God beheld man in a miſerable condition, by reaſon of the breach of the Frſt Covenant, in the unſearchable riches of his goodneſs, according to the eternal purpoſe of his good Will towards Man, he made an agreement with his Son to ſend him amongſt a generation of ſinful Men, that if he would undertake to bring them back into acquaintance with the Father; he was willing and ready to receive them again into acquaintance with him; the Son being the expreſs Image of his Fathers will, and perſon, hath the ſame good will to man with the Father, and is ready to cloſe with his Fathers propoſals; and ſo enters into a Covenant with the Father to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, and to take away Sin, and to take away the middle wall of Separation, to recover a choſen generation, and to bring them back again to God. Thus he became the head of another Covenant

nant between God and man. And as the first Covenant was made with *Adam* for him and his seed; So the second Covenant is made with Jesus Christ, for him and his seed. Because that the first Covenant was broken in *Adam*, therefore the second Covenant was put into surer hands, into the hands of the Son, *the second Adam*, the Lord from heaven. Now I say that the great design and purpose of this second Covenant is in reference to mans acquaintance with God, is clear. This is held forth to us in that parable of the lost sheep, Luke 15. 45. *When the shepheard had lost one sheep, he leaves the flock, and seeks for that which was lost.* So when man was lost by sin, Jesus Christ leaves all, to recover and fetch home that which was lost, *We are all gon astray like lost sheep, as* David *saith of himself*, Psal. 119. *Christ is come to seek and to save that which was lost*, Luke 19. 10. and Ephes. 2. 13, 14. *But now in Christ Jesus they who sometimes were afar-off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who hath made both one.* In verse the tenth, is a description of our state without Christ, *being aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, being strangers from the Covenant of promise, and having no hope, and without God in the world.* This is a description of our unacquaintance with God. But Christ makes up the breach, and that by a double Act.

First, by Covenant with the Father, to make man fit for communion with him.

Secondly, His giving man assurance that the Father will receive him upon his return.

This then is the great design in all those glorious accomplishments of Christ for this, he left his Fathers bosome, that he might bring us into

acquaintance with the Father; for this end did he who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, make himself of no reputation, and took upon him the *form of a servant*, and was made in the *likeness of man*; and being found in fashion of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, *even the death of the Cross*, that he might bring man into a re-union with God; for this end did Christ live a wearisome troublesome life among a company of Rebells and Enemies, as if a man should live among Toads and Serpents: So that he cryed out, as weary of any longer abiding with them, *Oh faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?* For this did he make himself an *offering for sin*; that by taking away sin, he might bring men to God. This is the great purpose of Christ in all his offices. Ye have heard of the three Offices of the Mediator, that he is a *Priest*, a *Prophet* and a *King*. This is the end of the Priestly Office. The purpose of Christs offering up himself a Sacrifice, was by satisfying the justice of God, to make way for sinners return to God. This is the end of his prophetical Office, to lead men into knowledg and acquaintance with God. This is the end of his Kingly Office; that governing them, and ruling their hearts by his Spirit, he might effectually bring men to God, to acquaintance with him. Now then, since this is the great design of God in his great dispensation towards man, to keep men in acquaintance with himself, and to reduce him when he had lost it; doth it not concern us to do our part for the bringing to pass this great work? shall God lose his end in making us, and in setting man in the

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world every way furniſhed for his ſervice? and ſhall God loſe his end in ſending his Son to receive us, when we had forſaken him? Shall Chriſt leave his Fathers boſom to bring us home to the Father, and ſhall we refuſe to return? Shall he pour out his ſoul, an offering for ſin, that he might make way for our acceſs to God, *that we who were far off, might be made nigh by the blood of Chriſt?* and ſhall we fruſtrate all by our refuſing to go to him? ſhall Chriſt come and offer us his help and direction to come to the Father, and ſhall we abide ſtill ſtrangers? Shall the Kings Son come into our Cottages to invite us to dwell with his Father at Court, and ſhall we ſhut the door upon him, eſteeming our Cottages better than his Pallace?

Secondly, It is the duty of man to acquaint himſelf with God, becauſe therein is the improvement of his higheſt excellency. Every one acknowledgeth an excellency in man, above all the reſt of this lower world: Now what is this excellency of man? Is it not that he is made in a capacity of knowing God, and enjoying God, and having Communion with God? This is the height of his glory, Jer. 9.23,24. *Thus ſaith the Lord, let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor the rich man in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he underſtands and knoweth me, that I am the Lord that exerciſe loving kindneſs, and righteouſneſs in the earth, and judgment, for in theſe things I delight, ſaith the Lord.* Yee ſee here, wherein man is to glory, for which he may value himſelf as truly glorious. In his underſtanding, and knowing of God, man ſtandeth above the reſt of the Creatures

tures, in that he is a rational intellectual Agent. This is part of the Image of God, even knowledg, *Col.* 3. 15 *which is renewed in knowledg after the Image of him that created him.* The nigher any thing resembleth God, the greater is the excellency of that thing: now in this we resemble God more than any other Creature, in that we are knowing, understanding Agents; and the highest improvement of this excellency of man is in the knowledg of God, and acquaintance with God, *Prov.* 20. 27. *The spirit of a man is called the candle of the Lord*; that is, it is a light set up in the soul, to direct the soul to a discovery of God. This is the highest improvement of our greatest excellency, & this is the excellency of man above other Creatures: this is that whereby one man excels another. Who are those whose names are as precious ointment poured forth? who are those which have obtained a good report? Are not they those who were most acquainted with God? *Enock* is said to walk with God; an expression which signifies intimate acquaintance with God; and therefore was *translated that he should not see death.* And *Noah*, whose family alone was preserved when God destroyed the old World by water, he was said to walk with God, *Gen.* 6. 9. Among all the sons of men he kept close to God; and God took care of him alone. *Abraham* who was the Father of the Faithful, he was called *the Friend of God.* *Moses* who was the Mediator of the old Covenant, he was said to *speak with God face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.* I might make mention of many more, who were the excellent ones of the earth; because they did delight in God, & God delighted in them, *Mal.* 3. 16, 17.

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They that feared the Lord, ſpake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard: and the book of remembrance was written for them that fear the Lord, and that thought upon his name: And they ſhall be mine, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, in the day when I make up my Jewels. Ye ſee how God accounts of thoſe that are of his acquaintance, that met together and ſpake of God, and that thought upon his name; he reckons them amongſt his Jewels his peculiar Treaſure: Such honour have all thoſe that are acquainted with God. Ye ſee then the excellency of man above all the reſt of the other Creatures. Now if man fail in this which is his higheſt excellency, he will become the vileſt of Creatures. Every thing if it fail in its chiefeſt end and purpoſe, and higheſt excellency, becomes baſe and of no account: *If ſalt loſe its ſavour* (ſaith our Saviour) *it is good for nothing.* If man have loſt his acquaintance with God, he is henceforth good for nothing. The mind of man is his eye, by which he is to behold God; now if this eye be blind, if the light be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs! The *Jews* in *Ezek.* 15. 1. are likened to a Vine, which, if it be barren, is good for no uſe: Shall wood be taken thereof for any work? It is fit for nothing but to burn. So it is in man, his great uſe and excellency is his acquaintance with God: now if he fails in this, he is good for nothing. Verily, man is a baſe, vile worthleſs thing without acquaintance with God. None are leſs eſteemed among men, than they that want wiſdome to converſe among men. None are leſs eſteemed before God, than they that know him not, that have not acquaintance with him, to converſe

verſe with him. Ye ſee wherein the excellency and worth of man conſiſteth, and that if there be a deformity, where ought to be our chiefeſt beauty, the whole is accounted as a deformed piece. It concerns us then to look that we keep our glory unſpotted, our excellency in its due value; that we do not degrade our ſelves below what God hath placed us in. If we are not acquainted with God, our ſouls ſerve us to little purpoſe: it is a cauſing the Prince, the Soul, to go on foot, and to ſerve the body, which ſhould be as a ſervant; it is to let the candle of the Lord burn out in waſte.

Thirdly, Another enforcement of this duty of Acqaintance with God, is this. If we refuſe acquaintance with God, it is a ſlighting the greateſt of all the mercies that God beſtowes. Favors are to be valued, either by their proper excellencies, or according to the good will of him that beſtowes them: both theſe ways this is to be accounted the greateſt of mercies. In Gods giving us leave to be acquainted with him, he gives out himſelf to be known, to be loved, to be converſed with, to be enjoyed. What greater gift can God give then himſelf? God is the portion of his people, he is the greateſt portion, the ſureſt, the moſt ſuitable, and the only durable portion. Thus theythat know him eſteem of him, *Pſal.*73.26. *My fleſh & my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, & portion for ever*, *Pſal.*16.5,6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance: the lines are fallen to me in a pleaſant place; yea, I have a goodly heritage. Bleſſed are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed are the people whoſe God is the Lord.* No

greater

greater mercy can be beſtowed upon any people, family, or perſon, than this, for *God* to dwell among them. If we value this mercy according to the excellency and worth of that which is beſtowed, it is the greateſt; if we value it acording to the good will of him that gives it, it will appear likewiſe to be the greateſt favour. The greatneſs of the good will of *God* in giving himſelf to be our acquaintance, is evident in the nature of the gift. A man may give his eſtate to them to whom his love is not very large; but he never gives himſelf but upon ſtrong affection. *God* gives abundantly to all the works of his hands, he cauſeth the Sun to ſhine upon the evil, and upon the good; and the rain to deſcend upon the juſt and the unjuſt: But it cannot be conceived, that he ſhould give himſelf to be a Portion, a friend, Father, Husband, but in abundance of Love. Whoſoever therefore ſhall refuſe acquaintance with *God*, ſlighted the greateſt favour that ever *God* did beſtow upon man. Now conſider what a high charge this is; to abuſe ſuch a kindneſs from *God*, is an act of the greateſt vileneſs. *David* was never ſo provoked, as when the King of *Ammon* abuſed his kindneſs in his Ambaſſadors, after his fathers death. And *God* is highly provoked when his greateſt mercies, beſtowed in the greateſt love, are rejected, and caſt away. What could *God* give more and better than himſelf? And how heavy will this imputation be! Theſe are thoſe that look upon *God*, as not worth being acquainted with. Let us therefore conſider how we ſhall be able to ſtand to theſe Accuſations. Shall we not be ſpeechleſs, when theſe things ſhall be charged upon

upon us? Shall we not be confounded, when we ſtand to the trial of him to whom we had offered theſe great indignities? How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, ſo great a mercy?

Fourthly, It concerns us to acquaint our ſelves with God, for without it we are in a neceſſity of ſin, and miſery.

1. The ſoul unacquainted with God is in a neceſſity of ſinning, *Epheſ.* 4. 14. *Having their underſtanding darkened, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* For want of acquaintance with God, every thought and imagination of their heart is evil continually, *Rom.* 30. 10, 11. *There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that underſtands, there is none that ſeeketh after God.* Not underſtanding, nor ſeeking after God, is the neceſſary cauſe that there is *none doth good.* The ſoul of man is an Active *being*, which is continually in motion; if it be not in motion to God and in God, it will be in motion from God. Hence it is that the prayer of the wicked is an abomination; that which goes for prayer, God abhors, becauſe they are not acquainted with him, *Iſa.* 1. 3. *The ox knows his owner, and the aſs his maſters crib, but* Iſrael *doth not know me*, verſ. 13, 14. To this, ſaith he, *your incenſe is abomination unto me, their new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even your ſolemn meetings.* Now the reaſon why there is a neceſſity of ſin without acquaintance with God, is, becauſe whatſoever is not done with a good heart, is not good, *Luk.* 6. 45. *The good man out of the good treaſure of his heart bringeth forth good fruit,*

and

and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart bringeth forth evil fruit: for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh. As an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, ſo an evil heart cannot bring forth a good action. Now without knowledg, the heart is not good, *Prov.* 19. 2. *That the ſoul be without knowledg is not good.* And there is no knowledg like the knowledg of God, And acquaintance with him, to make the heart good, *Hoſ.* 4. 2. *Becauſe there is not truth, nor mercy, nor knowledg of God in the land; therefore by ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing adultery, they break out,* &c. Thus want of knowledg of God, and acquaintance with God, we may plainly ſee, is the neceſſary cauſe of ſin. Now there is no greater evil on this ſide Hell then that of a neceſſity of ſinning, 2, *Pet.* 2. 14. Thoſe of which it is ſaid, *they cannot ceaſe from ſinning*, are called *curſed children.* He that chooſeth any ſin rather than affliction, doth it through the blindneſs of his mind. This is laid as a heavy accuſation, *Job* 39. 21. *For this haſt thou choſen rather than affliction.* To chooſe iniquity rather than affliction, is the greateſt folly imaginable. It is one great part of the miſery of Hell, that they never ceaſe from ſinning; and this is the greateſt miſery on earth, our being ſo much under the power of ſin. I appeal to any gracious ſoul that hath the feeling of the burden of ſin; what is it's great trouble and ſorrow? is it not becauſe of ſin? What are his ſecret moans to God? is it not the ſence of corruption? *Oh wrethed man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death,* ſaith *Paul, Rom.* 7. He had been complaining of the maſs of corruption that did ſtill preſs hard upon him, and in the

the ſtrong workings of his ſpirit againſt it, he calls it *The body of death.* It was as grievous to him as if he had been bound to a ſtinking rotten carcaſe. How wretched then is the ſtate of every ſoul unacquainted with *God*? Who can do nothing but ſin, becauſe they want the right rule of action, a right pattern of imitation, a right principle for action, a right object for action, a right end for action, the only aſſiſtance of action. It concerns us then as we make any difference between good and evil, if we have any reſpect unto holineſs and purity before ſin and iniquity, to ſee to get acquaintance with *God*; becauſe without acquaintance with *God*, we are in a woful neceſſity of ſinning.

2. Without acquaintance with God, we are in a neceſſity of miſery. Indeed ſin is a great miſery; and to be in a neceſſity of ſinning, is part of the neceſſity of miſery. But beſides that, there is a neceſſity of miſery of another kind. What is the great imployment of men unacquainted with God? Men labour in the very fire, and weary themſelves for very vanity, *Habak.* 2. 13. *This was the miſery of men, becauſe they know not God.* But in *verſe* 14. there is a promiſe of better days, *When the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the ſea.* Then and not till then will there be a deliverance from labouring in the fire when there is the knowledg of *God.* The reaſon of it is, becauſe true ſatisfaction and peace cannot be, till out deſires and enjoyments are alike; and this cannot be, till the ſoul is acquainted with *God*: For nothing can fill up the deſires of the ſoul but *God.* The ſoul of man is mighty ſpacious, ſo that it cannot be filled with the

world;

world ; and while it feels an emptineſs, it ſtill cryes out for more, and cannot be filled till it be filled with the fulneſs of God, *Epheſ.* 3. 19. The prodigal ſon had nothing but huſks to feed upon, when he was gone from his fathers houſe ; he would faine have filled his belly with the huſks, but could not ; they were not food for the ſoul. When we are departed from God, we have nothing to feed on but the world, and we would fill our ſouls with the world, but cannot ; for it is not food for the ſoul. *Acquaintance* with God is the food of the ſoul. *Job* 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the words of his mouth, more then my neceſſary food.* So that a ſoul that is not acquainted with God, is famiſhed for want of food, *Pſal.* 42. 2. *My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God. When ſhall I come & appeare before God ? David* was acquainted with God, but for want of an actual enjoyment, how doth he here breath out the trouble of his ſpirit ? *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth my ſoul after thee, O God.* The ſoul is ſtill panting. Some pant after the duſt of the earth, *Amos* 2. 7. Theſe were of the Serpents ſeed, whoſe curſe from God was, *Duſt ſhalt thou eat* : but the ſeed of Chriſt, they pant for God, & they that pant after God ſhall be filled with the fulneſs of God: but he that panteth after any thing beſides God, will never find any fulneſs ; he will feed as upon the duſt of the earth. And what can follow but diſſatisfaction and miſery ? Acquaintance with God is the only way to be freed from a neceſſity of ſin and miſery.

Fifthly, Acquaintance with God is the duty of man, becauſe God himſelf doth acquaint himſelf with man. Shall the King ſeek after acquaintance

with the meaneſt of his Subjects, and he refuſe acquaintance with his Soveraign? ſhall God acquaint himſelf with man, and ſhall not man acquaint himſelf with God! It is expected among men, that the inferiour ſhould ſeek for acquaintance with the Superiour, and not the Superiour to the inferiour; but yet God out of his wonderful love hath ſought firſt to man for acquaintance. Thus *Prov.* 8. 31. it is ſaid concerning the ſon of God, who is meant by *the Eternal Wiſdom of the Father, that he rejoyced in the habitable parts of the earth, & his delight was with the ſons of men.* If God thus delights in converſe and acquaintance with the ſons of men, how much more ought men to rejoyce in converſe and acquaintance with God, *Iſa.* 65. 1. God ſaith, *I am found of them that ſought me not.* All men were departed from God, and not a man that did ſeek after God; there is none that underſtands or ſeeks after God, yet God is found of them. The good ſhepherd ſeeks his loſt ſheep, before the ſheep ſought him, *Cant.* 5. 2. When the ſoul is aſleep, it hears the voice of its Beloved that knocks, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled,* Revel. 3 20. There Chriſt ſaith to the revolting Church, that he was ready to ſpew them out of his mouth, *Behold, I ſtand at the door, and knock: if any man will hear me, and open the door, I will come in and ſup with him, and he with me,* Pſal 68 18. *Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led captivity captive, thou haſt received gifts for men, yea for the rebellions alſo that the Lord God might dwell among them.* Is it not becoming then that man ſhould open when God knocks? He ſeeks to dwell among the rebellious, is it not fit that man ſhould enter into acquaintance

quaintance with God, when God doth thus acquaint himſelf with man? Thus I have opened to you the Nature of Acquaintance with God, and evidenced it to be the *Duty of Man*, to acquaint himſelf with God; let us now make ſome improvement of this Truth.

USE 1.

Firſt, Is there to be an acquaintance between the ſoul and God? Let us then ſtand and wonder at the great condeſcention of God! This may ſurpriſe our ſouls with an extaſie of admiration, that God ſhould dwell with man; that the mighty *Jehovah* ſhould have ſuch reſpect to the work of his hands, *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6. *Who is like unto the Lord, who dwelleth on high, who humbled himſelf to behold the things that are in heaven, and in earth?* The Pſalmiſt admireth God, that he humbled himſelf to behold things that are in heaven; and how much more then is he to be admired, that he humbled himſelf to acquaint himſelf with man? Let us than be filled with admiration, that God ſhould take us ſo nigh unto himſelf. As *Pſal.* 8.4 *What is man that thou art mindful of him! or the ſon of man that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him!* And Joh. 7. 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldeſt magnifie him! and that thou ſhouldeſt ſet thy heart upon him! and that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every morning!* Man in the pride of his heart ſeeth no ſuch great matter in it, but an humble ſoul is filled with aſtoniſhment, *Iſa:* 57. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One, which inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite & humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the*

humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Oh ſaith the humble ſoul, will the Lord have reſpect unto ſuch a vile worm as I am? will the Lord acquaint himſelf with ſuch a ſinful wretch as I am? Will the Lord open his arms, his boſome, his heart to me? ſhall ſuch a loathſome creature as I find favour in his eyes? In *Ezek.* 16.15. We have a relation of the wonderful condeſcention of God to man, who is there reſembled to a wretched infant caſt out in the day of its birth in its bloud, and filthineſs, no eye pitying it; ſuch loathſome creatures are we before God, and yet when he paſſed by, and ſaw us polluted in our bloud, *he ſaid unto us, live.* It is doubled, becauſe of the ſtrength of its nature, *it was the time of Love, verſ.* 8. This was love indeed, that God ſhould take a filthy, wretched thing, and ſpread his skirts over it, and cover its nakedneſs, and ſwear unto it, and enter into a covenant with it, and make it his; that is, that he ſhould eſpouſe this loathſome thing to himſelf, that he would be an husband to it; this is love unfathomable, love unconceivable, ſelf-principled love; this, is the love of God to man; for God is love: Oh the depth of the riches of the bounty and goodneſs of God! How is his love wonderful, and his grace paſt finding our! How do you find and feel your hearts affected upon the report of theſe things? do you not ſee matter of admiration, and cauſe of wonder? Are you not, as it were, lanched forth into an Ocean of goodneſs, where you can ſee no ſhoar, nor feel no bottom? Ye may make a Judgement of your ſelves by the motions and affections that ye feel in your ſelves at the mention of this. For thus Chriſt judged of the Faith

of

of the Centurion, that ſaid unto him, *Lord I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof*, Mat. 8. 8. *When Jeſus heard this, he marvailed, and ſaid to them that followed him, I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael.* If then you feel not your ſouls mightily affected with this condeſcention of God; Say thus unto your ſouls, What aileth thee, O my ſoul, that thou art no more affected with the goodneſs of God? Art thou dead, that thou canſt not feel? Or art thou blind, that thou canſt not ſee thy ſelf compaſſed about with aſtoniſhing goodneſs! Behold, the King of glory deſcending from the habitation of his Majeſty, and coming to viſit thee; heareſt not thou his voice, ſaying, *Open to me my ſiſter: behold, I ſtand at the door and knock. Lift up your ſelves, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting doors, that the king of glory may come in.* Behold, O my ſoul, how he waits ſtill while thou haſt refuſed to open to him! O the wonder of his goodneſs! O the condeſcention of his Love! to viſit me, to ſue unto me, to wait upon me, to be acquainted with me! Thus work up your ſouls into an aſtoniſhment at the condeſcention of God.

USE 2.

Secondly, Is there to be acquaintance between the ſoul and God? then let us learn to make a right judgement of our own Excellency; let us judge of our ſelves as too high and noble to converſe with this baſe and beggarly world. I am of a nobler original, then to debaſe my ſelf to ſuch mean things; I am the off-ſpring of God, and ſhall I acquaint my ſelf with earth? I am of

the family of God, & ſhall I converſe with Sathan? Is there bread enough in my Fathers houſe, and ſhall I periſh for hunger? Lift up thy ſelf, O my ſoul, ſhake off the intanglements of the fleſh, break out of that bondage of the Devil, trample upon the glory of the world, and ſcorn to let out thy precious deſires upon dung and droſs, get the Moon under thy feet, cloath thy ſelf with the Sun, put on the ſon of righteouſneſs, come into the palace of God, and acquaint thy ſelf with him, for this is thy glory, this is thy excellency. Ye precious ones, who can call God Father, and the ſon Brother, who have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, who may have communion with the Holy Ghoſt? What do you lying among the Potts? What do you raking in Dunghills? What do you converſing with the World? Have a holy ſcorn of theſe things, as below the dignity of your ſouls: know your worth, eſteem of your ſelves, as of more value then all theſe lower Treaſures. This is your glory and your excellency, that ye are of Gods acquaintance, that ye are Sons of God, Heirs of God, & joynt-Heirs with Chriſt, that ye underſtand and know God.

There are two things wherein moſt men are miſtaken.

Firſt, In the Nature of *Pride*. Some look upon that only as Pride, which manifeſteth it ſelf in coſtly Apparel, and bodily Ornaments, beyond the degree and rank of the perſon. Some look no further then the carriage of one man towards another. Now favourably conſider with me, that the greateſt Pride in the world is mans undue eſteem of himſelf toward God; and this

is

is in the heart of every one by nature. Every one by nature doth lift up himſelf againſt God, goes about to dethrone God, and to crown himſelf: Every one takes counſel in his heart againſt the Lord, ſaying, *Let us break his bands aſunder, and caſt his cords from us.* This is the voice of every one that dares wilfully to ſin. *We will not have God to rule over us.* Yet this is the working of the Pride of a man againſt God, to thruſt God out of the Throne of his Majeſty, and to ſet himſelf in. For what is Gods glory and reſpect among his creatures? Is it not this; that he being the *beginning*, and *Author* of *all*, ſhould be likewiſe the *end* of *all*? And this is the very purpoſe of God in making of man, that having received himſelf from God, he ſhould have what he might freely give up to God; ſo that all man is, and all that he hath, is to be offered to God, as the end and center of all. Now a ſinning creature brings God under to ſerve him, to provide for him. Now though this Pride of man againſt God be not ſo much taken notice of, yet it is the very daring ſin of the World. It is indeed to be wondered at, that ever creatures did caſt out the firſt thoughts of ſuch an attempt. Now conſider how far mans Pride is from his true Excellency in his Union with God. We are therefore to diſtinguiſh between that high eſteem that man is to have of himſelf, and pride. For man to look upon himſelf as a *noble being*, and of rank above all the *natural world*, it is not Pride, for thus he is (being a Spiritual underſtanding Agent) in a capacity of being acquainted with God, of being united to God, and, as I may ſay, of exchanging himſelf with God.

Secondly, Another miſtake of moſt men, is, concerning their *Dignity* and *Excellency*, and in the rule and meaſure of their *Excellency*. Moſt meaſure their Dignity by the advantage which they have over others in this world; As ſome in their Power and Authority; ſome in their Friends and Relations; ſome in their Riches and Eſtates; ſome in their Wiſdom and Faculties; ſome in their Strength and power. And what more univerſal evil is there then this, for every one in to ſomething or other to lift himſelf up in his own eſteem, and in his thoughts to tread upon others, as ſomething inferiour to himſelf? But men lie blinded in their own deluſions, not conſidering what is the true Excellency of man; nor know the right rule by which mans worth is to be judged of. The way for us to judge rightly concerning our ſelves, is to ſee how we ſtand towards God. God is the perfection of excellency; and the nigher we are to God, the greater is our excellency. This is the greatneſs of a Nation, to be nigh to God, *Deut.* 4. 7. *What nation is there ſo great which hath God ſo nigh unto them?* And *Amos* 8. 7. God is called the Excellency of *Jacob*. God ſweareth not by any thing below himſelf; therefore God is here meant, *Iſa.* 60. 19. God is called the *Glory of his people*. *The Lord ſhall be to thee an everlaſting light, & thy God thy Glory*. Now God is the glory of thoſe that are acquainted with him.

Firſt, By vertue of the Relation wherein God ſtands towards them. An intimate Relation to thoſe that are perſons of Dignity, & Worth, doth communicate Worth and Dignity to thoſe who are ſo related to them. As the ſon of a mean man

is not ſo highly valued and eſteemed as the ſon of a prince. *David* reckoned it to be a great thing to be Son-in-law to a King, 1 *Sam.* 18.18. *Who am I, and what is my life, or my fathers family in* Iſrael, *that I ſhould be ſon in-law to the king?* Thus are we to reckon it our Dignity and Excellency to be in nigh relation to God, to be ſons of God, to be heirs of God, and to be the friends of God, what greater honor then this to be in ſuch a nigh relation to the God of Glory? Now the Excellency that we have from this Relation, ariſeth from the excellency of that Act which is the Foundation of this Relation, and that is our being born of God, as we are Sons, *Joh.* 1. 12, 13. God marrying us to himſelf as he is our husband. *Jer.* 3. *Turn, O back ſliding children, ſaith the Lord, for I am married unto you.* God takes us into fellowſhip, & communion, and acquaintance with himſelf, as he makes us his friends, and his acquaintance. This act of God doth inſtamp a Worth and Excellency upon man, as the impreſſion of the Kings Seal upon Wax, and makes it of value, *Rev.* 22.4. It is here ſpoken as the glory of the ſervants of God, *Thoſe that follow the Lamb, they ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be in their foreheads*; that is, God hath choſen, and, as it were, marked them out for his own: and this marking them, and owing them, it ſets a high Dignity upon them, ſuch as ſecures them from the Curſe that is to be upon all beſides, as *Revel.* 9. 4. They are commanded to hurt none *but thoſe who have not the ſeal of God on their foreheads.* This Relation of the ſoul to God, gives the ſoul an excellency, as it doth intereſt the ſoul in the glory and excellency of God himſelf; they are Gods, and Gods is theirs, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *I*

will

will dwell in them, and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people, verſ. 17. He argues from the dignity of this relation, that they ſhould count themſelves too good to convers with the world; *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparated, ſaith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing: and I will receive you, and be a father to you, & you ſhall be my ſons & daughters, ſaith the Lord.* Thus you ſee the dignity that is upon the ſoul by its acquaintance with God. Our relation to God in our acquaintance with him, doth ennoble us, lift us above the world, make us that we are too good for the company of thoſe that are not acquainted with God. It is then no pride in us thus to eſteem of our ſelvs, to have high thoughts of our ſelves, becauſe of that acquaintance which our ſouls are to have with God. It is pride for to think too highly of our ſelves: but it is ſobriety to think of our ſelves according to that acquaintance which we have with God. *Rom.* 12. 3. *I ſay, through the grace of God given to me, to every one that is among you, not to think of himſelf more highly then he ought to think; but to think ſoberly according as God hath dealt to every man the meaſure of faith.* Here the Apoſtle commands them to meaſure the eſteem which they have of themſelves, by the meaſure of faith which they have from God; becauſe by faith they come to be valued excellent in the eye of God. So likewiſe we are to meaſure our eſteem which we have of our ſelves, by the meaſure of our acquaintance which we have with God: becauſe by acquaintance with him, we come to be truly excellent. And while we do thus, we ſhall not think more highly of our ſelves then we ought to think: for while

while we account our ſelves excellent becauſe of our acqaintance with God, we in lifting up our ſelves magnifie God; and while we thus glory, we glory in the Lord, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. But now herein we are to beware of two things.

Firſt, That we diſtinguiſh carefully between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our being actually acquainted with him: for our capacity, or being ſo as that we may be acquainted with God, is of no worth, unleſs we be actually acquainted with him. We are in a remote capacity naturally as men, and we are in a more nigh capacity by the mercy and covenant of God; but this adds no true worth to the ſoul without the actual acquaintance of the ſoul with God. Yea, man is the worſe for this, if he be without the other; for if man being made fit for enjoyment of God, and communion with him, never attain to an enjoyment of him, he becomes more vile then thoſe things whoſe nature is inferiour, if they attain to the perfection of that nature. And it is like to fare worſe with man, if he fall ſhort of the glory of God, becauſe he was capable of the glory of God, then with beaſts which are not capable of it. And again, in regard of that more nigh capacity wherein we are by Jeſus Chriſt of acquaintance with God, if we are not really acquainted with God, we ſhall thereby not only have no addition of excellency, but thereby we ſhall be more vile and miſerable: and therefore thoſe who through the mercy of God have been in the viſible Church, and have heard of the good will of God to man through Chriſt, and know that God is ready to entertain them into acquaintance with himſelf; if they ſhall fall

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ſhort of this, their condemnation will be greater then that of thoſe who never heard of Gods invitation, and his grace in Jeſus Chriſt. If we therefore ſhall glory in our capacity of being of the acquaintance of God, and neglect to be really acquainted with him, we do but as the *Jews* of old, who cried out, *The temple of the Lord are theſe, Jer.* 7. 4. And the nigher we are to God, if we do not come to a thorow cloſure with him, the nigher we are to the ſtroak of his wrath: as the nigher any is to Musket-ſhot, the greater will the force of it be upon him. Diſtinguiſh therefore between our capacity of being acquainted with God, and our actual acquaintance with him.

Secondly, we muſt be ware leſt in our eſteem of our ſelves, we lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves. There is that in every ones corrupt nature which doth provoke him to it: ſo that I dare boldly ſay, that there is not a man in his corrupt natural ſtate, who doth not ſome way or other lift up himſelf in his own eſteem for ſomthing of his own. And we are apt to make every ſpiritual excellency to be matter for pride and ſelf-conceitedneſs. We do not ſufficiently eye God as the Fountain, the Author, the Foundation, the Rule and Pattern of all our Excellency. Such is the way wherein God receiveth man to acquaintance with himſelf, that he might hide pride from his eyes, and that no fleſh might glory in his preſence, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. If we therefore lay the foundation of our glory in our ſelves, and pleaſe our ſelves in the ſparks that we have kindled, we ſhall glory in our ſhame, and lie down in ſorrow. This high eſteem which we are to have of

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our ſelves, becauſe of our acquaintance with God, it doth not at all contradict that precious grace of humility, but they rather help forward one another; for the more any eſteems of himſelf, becauſe of that relation which he hath to God, the leſs is the eſteem of himſelf, becauſe of any thing of his own; the more we make God the matter of our glory, the leſs do we glory in our ſelves. The more we apprehend of our Excellency, being from God, the leſs account do we make of all other ſeeming Excellencies. When the light of the Sun ariſeth, then all Star-light diſappears.

Firſt, All Dignity we have, ſeems to ariſe from that relation which we have to God in acquaintance with him.

Secondly, By acquaintance with God, we come to have an abſolute poſitive Dignity which is real in our perſons, yet ſtill depending upon God: As by our union with Chriſt we come to have a righteouſneſs imputed, which is our juſtification; and a righteouſneſs likewiſe inherent, which is our ſanctification; ſo by our acquaintance with God, we have a dignity, as it were, imputed by our relation to God, and a dignity real, which is that excellency whereby we are made abſolutely better. By acquaintance with God, we come to be like God; and the Image of God in us, is the greateſt excellency that we are capable of. When *Moſes* had been fourty days in the Mount with God, his face did ſhine with ſuch a brightneſs, that the people could not behold him: ſo thoſe that converſe with God, they retain a luſter, which ſhines in their converſe with men. The Image or picture of any worthy perſon, is ſteem-

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ed by them that eſteem the perſon, and this eſteem of it, is from a relation which it hath to that perſon; but now the children of any perſon whom we love, being a lively image of their fathers perſon, have another value upon them, having not only a relation worthy, becauſe of their reſemblance in the outward lineament, but a real participation of nature and diſpoſition, which they receive from their father: So there is an excellency in thoſe that are acquainted with God, not only as being in Relation to him, but as receiving, and being partakers of the Divine Nature. As Children learn to pronounce their words according to the pronunciation of the Mother, or Nurſe, with whom they converſe, (as every one is apt to be formed unto the manner and diſpoſition of the company wherein they muſt uſually are) thus thoſe who converſe with God; they become in ſome meaſure like unto God; and this is poſitive perſonal excellency which thoſe have which converſe with God. Thus the Apoſtle *John* argueth concerning that perfection of glory and excellency, which hereafter is to be upon thoſe that are the Sons of God. *But it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is.* In Heaven we ſhall be like God, becauſe we ſhall ſee God; and on earth thoſe that converſe with God, ſhall in ſome meaſure be like God according to their meaſure of acquaintance with him And ſo *Paul* argues concerning this preſent life, 2*Cor.* 3. 18. *But we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the ſpirit of the*

the Lord. Here we ſee clearly that beholding the glory of the Lord, doth change into the ſame image of God, and likewiſe that this image of God only is the glory of man; for that is meant by, *From glory to glory:* that is, from one degree of glorious ſimilitude, to another degree of glorious reſemblance and likeneſs to God. Thus ye have ſeen that the excellency of man conſiſteth in his acquaintance with God; and that by the vertue of his relation to God, he hath an impured excellency; and an excellency by his propriety in God, in whom is all excellency; and that by his converſe with God, and acquaintance with him, he becomes really like God, which is his inherent excellency. Let us then reckon of our ſelves as thoſe who have their Dignity and Excellency from God, and in this let us glory, That we know God, and are acquainted with God. This is the *Second Uſe* of this Propoſition.

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Thirdly, If man ought to be acquainted with God; then let us all enquire into our ſelves, whether we are acquainted with him or no. Let us every one turn into our own boſoms, and ask our ſelves this queſtion; Thou haſt heard, O my ſoul, that which is thy great Duty, that which is the very end of thy Creation, and thy Redemption, and that the higheſt perfection of thy nobleſt faculty conſiſts in knowing God, and being acquainted with him, which contains a nigh union to him, and intimate converſe with him, and mutual communion to God, and from God

God, and radicated unmoveable love to God: theſe are excellent things, O my ſoul, what is thy caſe? Art thou one of thoſe precious ones, which converſeſt oft with God, and talk oft of God, whom he will make up with his Jewels? Or art thou one of thoſe wretched Creatures, who are alienated from the life of God, by reaſon of the ignorance that is in thee? Or art thou one of thoſe who having been ſometimes afar off, art now made nigh to God by the bloud of Chriſt, and ſo art lead into fellowſhip and communion with the Father and the Son by the Spirit? Or art thou one of thoſe who looks upon God afar off, and upon whom God looks afar off? I beſeech you every one of you, deal ſeriouſly and accurately with your ſelves in this inquiry, for it is moſt certain, that moſt men in the world, yea in the viſible Church, are not acquainted with God. Thus it hath been in all generations from the beginning of the world, and thus it is at this day: the people of God have been like a little flock of ſheep, while the reſt are like locuſts, covering the whole face of the earth. The people of God have ſtill complained that they are but as the gleaning of the vintage, and as two or three Olive-berries in the top of the utmoſt branches, when the reſt have been gathered. The viſible Church of God, in reſpect of the reſt of the world, how ſmall a part is it! In the viſible Church, how few live up to their Religion, by any conſiderable profeſſion! How little difference is there between moſt among us, and Heathens! And of thoſe that profeſs, and lay claim to ſomething beyond others among whom they live, how many betray their Profeſſion by

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their wicked practice and worldly converſation? So that when we have made enquiry, there will remain very few of thoſe that are really acquainted with God, it concerns us then to be very diligent in enquiry, what is our caſe, how we ſtand toward God.

Secondly, I ſhall be the more earneſt in preſſing you upon a diligent ſearch into what acquaintance you have gotten with God; becauſe, I know that thoſe that have leaſt acquaintance with God, are moſt apt to neglect this enquiry. It may be a tender ſoul that hath been much with God, will be ready upon the firſt hint to enter into the ſecrets of its own heart, to look over his evidences, to call to mind, when have I drawn nigh to God? When have I converſed with God? When have I communion with God? Hath my life been a walking with *God*? Have I dwelt with *God*, and made my abode with him? Thus the ſoul that makes high account of its acquaintance with *God*, will be trying and examining it ſelf; and it may be upon its more awakened ſigns of its ſometimes departing from *God*, or feeling ſome preſent ſtrangeneſs, it will be apt to conclude of it ſelf, ſurely I am none of thoſe precious ones, whoſe life is a converſe with *God*. But the common generation of the world, Oh how hardly will they be brought to ask themſelves this queſtion, whether they are of the acquaintance of *God* or no! How often have they been urged with a great and vehement affection upon trial, how their ſouls ſtand towards *God*? and hitherto they have neglected it. Many are ſo inconſiderate as to think what is ſpoken is nothing to them: they come and ſit in the Con-

gregation, but their hearts are out of reach, out of the ſhot of the Word; ſo they go away, and the word to them is, as if it had not been. Many are ſo light, and vain, and frothy in their ſpirits, as that the ſtreams will almoſt as ſoon return to their fountain, as they will be perſwaded to turn in and enquire into their own ſouls. In all naturally there is an averſeneſs to come to the light, that their works and hearts may be manifeſted. If *I* ſhould come to you one by one, and beſeech you with the greateſt earneſtneſs, wherewith *I* were able, when you go from the congregation to take opportunity to go in ſecret, and enter upon tryal with your hearts, and ask your ſelves throughly this queſtion, and let them not alone till you have a clear determinate anſwer, whether you are in a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*; *I* fear you would go, one to his pleaſures, another to this vanity, and another to his covetouſneſs, and almoſt all of you neglect this work of ſo great concernment. Let me therefore urge you with all earneſtneſs, that you will not account it a ſmall matter, whether you be acquainted with *God* or not; and ſo neglect this trial of your ſelves: *B*ut bring your hearts up roundly to the examination, yield not to their unreaſonable withdrawings, force them to anſwer. If you make any account of the charge of *God*, if you make any account of the excellency of man, if you would not loſe the higheſt priviledge of the Creature, if you have any eſteem of the life of heaven, know your ſelves in this, whether you are in a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*, and be ſerious and diligent in this enquiery.

Thirdly, Becauſe men are ſo exceeding apt to be

be miſtaken, and to miſapprehend concerning themſelves, that they are in a ſtate of acquaintance with God, while they are meer ſtrangers unto him; ſuch as thoſe whom our Saviour ſpeaks of, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. *Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name, and in thy name have caſt out Devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?* and then he will profeſs unto them, *I never knew you: depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* They take it for granted, that becauſe of ſuch priviledges, & gifts, & common graces which they had, therefore they were well acquainted with Chriſt; but our Saviour anſwereth, *I never knew you*; that is, I never had any acquaintance with you. Such are thoſe who are reſembled to us by five fooliſh Virgins, *Matth.* 25. 11. The five fooliſh Virgins come when the door is ſhut, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, open unto us*; *but he anſwereth, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not*; that is, never had acquaintance with you: you never knew me in the time of your life, and I will not know you now: you were aſhamed to own me before men, and I will be aſhamed to own you before my Father. Men are ſo apt to be miſtaken in judgment of themſelves, that they think themſelves rich and encreaſing with goods, and to have need of nothing, when they are wretched, miſerable and poor, and blind, and naked. And this makes *David*, *Pſal.* 139. 24. to cry out after he had been trying himſelf, *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting.* This unaptneſs in us to make a right judgement of our ſelves in our relation to God, ariſeth

First, From that deep root of self-love that is in us by nature, whereby we are apt to apprehend well of our selves, and please our selves with a good conceit of our selves, though we are never so bad. And such is the nature of this affection, that it blinds our eyes, and prejudiceth the mind, that it cannot make a right judgment. As affection in some Parents to their Children, makes them reckon that which is a blemish, to be a beauty in their children; so doth inordinate self-love work in men, in the judgment of themselves. Men when they judge themselves, they look into a flattering glass which presents them in greater beauty then that which is their own.

Secondly, we judge amiss of our selves, because we take not a right rule for our judgments, as those whom *Paul* speaks of, 2 *Corinthians* 10. 12. *Some commend themselves, but they measure themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise.* If we take our selves to be the rule and measure, then we cannot discern our own crookedness and irregularness.

Thirdly, We judge amiss of our selves, because of the deceitfulness of our hearts. *The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer.* 17. 9. *Gross wickedness is apparent to the pur-blind eye*; but where there is an abstaining from gross outward sins, there are special workings of Corruption, such as pride, self-love, distrust of God, and love of the world; any of which shut up the soul against God, as with bolts and bars; and these lying inward are not discerned. Other accounts may be given of the unaptness to make a due judgment of our selves: it concerns us therefore

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to be exact in our tryal, and trust not to a sudden answer; for we are ready to make a short work of it, and to save our selves the labour, and to sit down with charitable thoughts of our selves. Whatsoever answer therefore our hearts give us, let us see cleared, and have such reason for it, that we may know how to proceed with our selves, upon a right judgment of our selves. The chief work of trial in this particular acquaintance with God, will be from those particulars wherein I opened the nature of the souls acquaintance with God. Let us therefore take those Heads and our own Experience of our selves, and by a rational deduction, let us find out our own estate.

As thus, Those that are acquainted with God are brought nigh to God. Whereas sometimes there was a strangeness and remoteness, a vast separation, now the partition is taken out of the way, and I am made one in Christ. I have took God to be my portion, and my Father; I have been a Prodigal, and have departed from him, but I finding my self lost and undone, and that nothing could satisfie my soul in the world, therefore I resolved I would return to my Fathers house, and try if he would receive me again into his family; and so I have done. I have cast off my old converse with the world, and with corruption; I have broken my league with Hell, and have entered into a covenant with the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ; therefore I may comfortably conclude that I am now in a state of acquaintance with God.

But if in the enquiry into my self I find not these things, if I find that now I am as in former

dayes; I have felt no ſuch change in my ſelf, and that all things are with me as they were of old; I never was ſenſible of any loſs in my ſelf; I never knew what ſtrangeneſs and nighneſs to God meant; I never underſtood what union with God, and diſtance from God was; this ſignifies ill, it is a ſymptome of a bad ſtate; of a ſtate of unacquaintance with God.

2. So again, for our converſe with God. He that is acquainted with God, he hath had his converſe with God, he hath dwelt with God, and God with him; he hath ſupped with Chriſt, and Chriſt with him; his great buſineſs and employment hath been nigh God, in thoſe things wherein is moſt of God. If I find my ſoul much converſing with God, oft ſending out breathings to Heaven, oft caſting my eye towards God, if I find the great work of my mind to be with God, my great buſineſs lies in Heaven, my treaſure is laid up there, and my thoughts, and deſires, and joys, and delights, and meditations are there; I may comfortably conclude that I am in ſome meaſure acquainted with God. But if in the inquiry into my ſelf, I find that I have my whole converſe with the world, that I can afford no time for Prayer to God in my family, and in ſecret; If I find all the day long my cares, and deſires, and thoughts, run out moſt naturally and fully without controle towards the things of the world, or that I will mind my ſelf in a natural carnal way, and mind not the things of God; this ſignifies to me my unacquaintance with God, and it will be an ungrounded preſumption in me to reckon of my ſelf any other then a ſtranger to him.

3. So for communion and fellowſhip, which

is in acquaintance. Thoſe that are intimately acquainted, their communion in the way of diſcourſe is very frequent, in making known their thoughts and apprehenſions, their fears and wants; their minds are open one to another, and that which is the propriety of one, is by their acquaintance communicated to the uſe of both. If then I can find in reviewing the workings of my ſoul, that there hath been this ſight of Heaven, this Spiritual Communion between my ſoul and *God*; that my heart hath been open to *God*; that I have gone to *God* when my heart hath been burdened with ſorrow, I have diſcharged it into the boſom of *God*, as into the boſom of a friend; that in my doubts I have betaken my ſelf to him, expecting comfort from him; that upon hearing his voice I have opened to him, and upon my opening he hath come in with ſmiles of love, and given me tokens of his favour: theſe things ſignifie a ſtate of acquaintance with *God*: but if I know not what it is to have given up my ſoul to *God*, to be his, and to have taken *God* to be mine, if I have had experience of receiving nothing elſe from *God*, but a partaking of the things of the world: if I have not been wont to communicate the workings of my mind to God, it betokeneth my unacquaintance with *God*.

4. And again, for that friendly working of love and affection in the ſoul towards *God*. Thoſe that are in a ſtate of acquaintance are ſuppoſed to comply with each other in kindneſs, and love, and good will, and affection. If then I can upon ſearch into my ſelf, find that *God* hath the higheſt room in my affections, that my heart is his, that his love is prevailing with me, above the

love of all things beſide, and that I love thoſe that are his beloved for his ſake, then I have in me a ſign of regal acquaintance with God; for love is the very quinteſſence of acquaintance: but if in the ſearch into the workings of my mind I can find no ſuch friendly compliance, but that God was ſtill thwarting and croſſing my deſigns, that I ſhould find my ſelf better content if there were no God, and that thoſe workings of my mind that are about *God* are ſower, harſh, and tearing upon my ſpirit, then it is to be feared, that I have no acquaintance with *God*.

And haſt thou made an impartial inquiry into thy ſtate? And how ſtand things between thy Soul and *God*? Art thou acquainted with him, or art thou not? Conſider ſeriouſly O ſinners, that this is one of the weightieſt queſtions in the world; and if this queſtion were but well reſolved, it would put an end to a thouſand other queſtions. He that can ſay of *God* and Chriſt, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, he need not very ſolicitouſly ask, what news? He hath heard good news from Heaven, which will eaſily ballance all, come what will come, he need not much paſs, as long as there ſtands that one Text in the Bible; *That all ſhall work together for good to them that love God.* He hath no cauſe to goe a begging to the world, and to ſay, *who will ſhew me any good?* As long as the Lord hath ſhined upon him with the light of his countenance. He need not complain, what ſhall I do? I have loſt this or that dear friend; when he hath found him, who can make up all with one look, whom he can never loſe. In a word, he need not ask, how ſhall I do to live? and

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what ſhall I eat, and what ſhall I drink, and wherewithall ſhall I be cloathed? So long as he knows that he hath a noble friend, who will eaſe him of all this care, and never ſee him want. Well then, haſt thou anſwered this great queſtion or not? Or wilt thou do by thy conſcience, as *Felix*, put it off, and ſay, thou wilt hear of theſe matters, at ſome more convenient ſeaſon; and I wonder when that more convenient ſeaſon will be; and why not now, I pray? What ſeaſon more fit then the preſent? I am ſure God ſaith, *Now is the acceptable time*; and do you know better then he? What haſt thou to do that is more neceſſary? Speak out I pray, is the following of thy pleaſures? Is the ſerving of Satan? Is the damming of thy Soul, more neceſſary then the ſaving of it? Is the life and death of a Soul nothing? Are everlaſting glory and miſery ſmall matters? Is the love or hatred of thy God ſo inconſiderable a thing? Awake O ſinner, what meaneſt thou? Ariſe ſpeedily, and look about thee man. Conſider ſeriouſly as thou valueſt thy Soul, what beſt becomes a ſinner in thy condition: What anſwer ſhall I return to my Maſter? Are not theſe things worth the thinking of? Shall I ſay for all this, that thou art not at leiſure to look after an intereſt in his favour, or any thing that tends to it? Shall I tell him that thou haſt ſomthing of greater weight, and higher importance to trouble your head with? And do you in ſober ſadneſs think ſo? For you make account, *that* excuſe is ſufficient? I pray then make uſe of it your ſelf (for I dare not.) When God ſhall come to ask you, why you did no more vigorouſly

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mind the getting acquaintance with himself, tell him then if you think that anſwer will ſerve your turn, that you were not at leiſure, you had ſuch urgeth occaſions which took up the whole of your time, ſuch and ſuch a friend you had, who ſent for you to the Tavern, and you could not poſſibly come when he invited you, tell him if you believe that plea will hold water, that you would have been glad to have come upon his invitation, but that you were taken up with ſuch good old friends, the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil. How do you think ſuch an anſwer will be taken? You may think to put us off with ſuch kind of reaſons as this: but do you hope by this anſwer to ſatisfie your Judge? Believe it ſinner, God will not thus be put off. Wherefore I do again with all the earneſtneſs I can for my ſoul renew by ſuit to thee, that thou wouldeſt act like a man in his wits; make ſome ſerious inquiry into the ſtate and condition of thy ſoul. And conſider for the Lords ſake again and again, before you ſend me away thus, what errand I come to you on: It is to treat with you about a rich match for thy poor undone ſoul: therefore conſider well what you do before you make light of this buſineſs, and know when you are well offered; believe it, *God* will not long ſend after you in this manner, and you are not like every day to have ſuch proffers; Divine Patience and Goodneſs will not always plead at this rate with you; *God* will ere long ſay, let them alone: the Lord will ere long ſpeak to ſcornful ſinners in ſuch language that will make their ears to tingle; he will deſpiſe and ſlight as well as they: and who is like to have the worſt of it at laſt?

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I leave to any rational man to judge. The time is coming, when your ungodly hearts ſhall ake to ſee him whom you might have had for your husband; when you ſhall have him for your Judge, whom you might have had for your Advocate. And though we could not get you to be willing to be acquainted with him, no, not ſo much as to have any ſerious thoughts about it, or to make any enquiry after him to inform your ſelf concerning him; yet you ſhall have him for your enemy whether you will or no. But O let us not part thus! let me, a man like thy ſelf, reaſon the caſe a little more with thee; come tell me poor ignorant creature, thou that ſtill ſtandeſt demurring, and ſayſt, Shall I, ſhall I? what evil is there in thy God that thou ſhouldeſt be thus hardly brought, ſo much as to diſcourſe this buſineſs with thy own ſoul? What is the reaſon that thou ſcarce thinkeſt it worth the while to trouble thy head about any thing that doth concern your intereſt in his love? Thou that mindeſt his love ſo little, tell me what do'ſt thou think had become of thee long before this, if God had regarded thee as little as thou doſt him? What wouldeſt thou have done, had the Lord ſaid to any Diſeaſe, the leaſt of his Meſſengers, fetch that Rebel before me, that values not my favour; he ſhall know what my anger is, ſeeing he will not prize my love. O what a lamentable caſe hadſt thou been in, had God but done by thee as thou haſt by him? *Acquaintance with God*! methinks ſinful man ſhould ſtand and wonder at ſuch a word; methinks he ſhould be even ſurprized with an extaſie of admiration; and ſay, and will God indeed be acquainted with

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ſuch a Worm, ſuch a dead Dog, ſuch a Rebel as I? *Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the ſon of man, that thou ſhouldeſt make ſuch an offer to him?* One would think thou ſhouldeſt no more diſpute the matter then *Eſther* did, when that great Monarch made her his Queen. Were it but in ſenſible things, that nothing near ſuch an offer were made (which is impoſſible) man would think the very queſtioning in ſuch a caſe a ſtrange folly. One would think that every one of Gods enemies that have been in open Rebellion againſt him, and are utterly unable to make their part good againſt him, when they hear of ſuch tearms of mercy from their Prince, who hath all their lives in their hand, ſhould rejoyce at this news, and ſay, *How beautiful are the feet of them which bring ſuch tidings?* How did *Benhadad* look, when inſtead of a Halter he had a Coach? When inſtead of Rebel, he heard Brother? Whatever we may think of theſe things, *David* thought it high time for him to bid ſuch a Meſſenger welcome, and to open his heart for the receiving his God: Hear what he ſaith to his own heart and others, *Pſal.24. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting doors, that the king of glory may come in.* And becauſe the door of mens hearts is lock'd and barr'd, and bolted, and men are in a deep ſleep, & will not hear the knocking that is at the gate, though it be loud, though it be a King: therefore *David* knocks again, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlaſting doors*: Why, what haſte, ſaith the ſinner? What haſte? Why, here's the King at your Gates; and that not an ordinary King neither, he is a glorious King that will honour you

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ſo far, if you open quickly, as to lodge within, to take up his abode in your houſe, to dwell with you; but the ſoul for all this doth not yet open, but ſtands ſtill queſtioning, as if it were an enemy, rather then a friend that ſtood there, and ask, who is this *King of glory?* Who? he anſwers again, *It is the Lord of hoſts*; he, that if you will not open quickly and thankfully, can eaſily pull your houſe down about your ears; He is the Lord of Hoſts, that King who hath a mighty Army always at his command, who ſtand ready for their Commiſſion, and then you ſhould ſoon know who it is you might have had for your friend; *Lift up therefore your heads, O ye gates*; open quickly, ye that had rather have God for your friend then for your enemy. O why ſhould not the ſoul of every ſinner cry out, Lord, the Door is locked, and thou haſt the key, I have been trying what I can do, but the Wards are ſo ruſty that I cannot poſſibly turn the Key; but Lord, throw the Door off the Hinges, any thing in the world, ſo thou wilt but come in and dwell here: Come, O mighty God, break through Doors of Iron, and Bars of Braſs, and make way for thy ſelf by thy love and power. Come, Lord, and make thy ſelf welcome, all that I have is at thy ſervice: O fit my ſoul to entertain thee! But where is the ſinner that is in this note? How ſeldom do poor Creatures deſire Gods company, or bewail his abſence? Where almoſt are the men and women to be found, that do in good earneſt long to be acquainted with God? Men are naturally ſtrangers to God, and it is a wonderful difficult thing to perſwade men to enter into ſo much as a ſerious deliberate conſideration of

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theſe things. Though it be ſo infinitly for their intereſt; though the God that made them, out of pity to their ſouls deſires it, though he ſend his Embaſſadors in his name to beſeech them to be reconciled unto God, againſt whom they have been in open arms; though in infinite mercy he perſwade them to lay down their weapons, and promiſe them Free and General Pardon, and to receive them into Favour, and to forget and forgive; yet where is the ſinner almoſt to be found that with any thankfulneſs doth cloſe with theſe tenders? Now it being a buſineſs of ſuch infinite concernment, and it being the very work and buſineſs of a Miniſter of Chriſt to bring God and man into union, to get man acquainted with God, I ſhall in the next place labour to inforce this Exhortation upon the hearts of ſinners, and do what I can poſſible to prevail with them that are as yet ſtrangers, to get acquainted with God, that they may have peace, and that thereby good might come unto them.

EXHORTATION.

Once more, poor ſinners, That God which can in a moment ſtop thy breath, and ſend thee into Hell, doth offer to be friends with thee. If thou wilt come upon his invitation, well and good, thou art a happy man for ever; if not, thou wilt rue the day that ever thou wert born: yet, through mercy the matter is not gone ſo far, but that thou mayeſt (if you will now at laſt in good earneſt humble thy ſelf to him) be received into favour. Behold, a Pardon, Mercy, and Grace! ſtand aſtoniſhed, O ye Heavens, at this infinite con-

condeſcention, wonder O ye Angels, and pry into this kindneſs. Was there ever ſuch condeſcention, love, and goodneſs heard of? If thou didſt but underſtand, O ſtupid ſinner, what an offer is made to thee, thou couldeſt not but adore that goodneſs that can pardon and forget ſuch offences, and receive ſuch a Creature into favour; thou wouldeſt alſo cry out with as great admiration as he did; *what manner of love*! you would think it a mercy not to be paraleli'd, a kindneſs never to be forgotten, a propoſal by no means to be refuſed. Now that I may, if poſſible, prevail with ſome that are yet afar off, to come near, I ſhall enforce this Exhortation with many powerful Motives, the leaſt of which (were men but well in their wits as to Spiritual matters, were the world not to a wonder fools, in the great affairs of their ſouls and eternity) might eaſily prevail. O that I might prevail! O that ſome might be perſwaded! O that God would put life and power into theſe words, that they might prove effectual to the intended ends! O that ſome poor rebellious ſinners might be made to cloſe with the moſt advantagious offers that ever were, or could be made to Creatures in our condition!

MOTIVES.

The firſt *Head* of *Motives* that I ſhall inſiſt upon to inforce this *Exhortation*, ſhall be taken from the nature of the Perſon that I would have you acquainted with. Conſider well what kind of friend you are like to have of him; and if, after you have well weighed what I ſhall (with Gods leave)

leave) ſay, you can find out any one in Heaven or in Earth that will be a better friend to you, and ſtand you in more ſtead; if in all the world you bring one that deſerves better at your hands, and is more worthy of your choiceſt love, and acquaintance, if I bid you to your loſs, why then let me bare the blame of a Cheater for ever. And if after trial, thorow trial, and intimate acquaintance, you find your ſelf deceived, and that it was not worth the while to give your ſelf ſo much trouble, why then let me be branded to Eternity for the verieſt Lyar and Impoſtor in the world. For my part, I envy not men their happineſs, but I wiſh with all my heart, that men would do that which may be moſt for their intereſt. It was the counſel of *Epitterus*, none of the weakeſt men, though a Heathen, *Make choice of that which is really moſt Excellent; and if there be a Friend to be found better then thy God, the firſt thing thou doſt, get an intereſt in him.* But conſider whether there be not a contradiction in the tearms, *Better then the beſt*; it's perfect nonſenſe. I know it's impoſſible for any one that hath right apprehenſions of God to undervalue him. Wherefore it is a grand piece of Religion, to have clear apprehenſions of God; ſuch can't but believe him to be infinitely Lovely, Wiſe, and powerful, and to be obeyed in all things; and all the reaſon in the world to acquieſce in his will, who is ſo good and ſo wiſe; ſuch will place happineſs in nothing below his favour. Wherefore I think *Plutarch* was not miſtaken, who affirmed, *That mans life was given him of God, only to get the knowledge of God.* But I ſhall be a little more particular in ſpeaking to the excellent qualifications of him

him, whom I would fain get every poor ſinner acquainted with.

Firſt, He is the moſt loving and kind friend. Poor ignorant Creatures that are ſtrangers to him, they talk at a mad rate concerning him: thoſe that know him not will be ſpeaking bad, and thinking worſe of him; but, O did they but know what God is to them that are acquainted with him, had they but converſed with him themſelves, did they but ſee what entertainement he gives, had they but been in his company, and experienced what ſome have experienced, had they but beheld how affectionately he imbraces them which come to him; they would quickly ſay that it was a falſe report, and wicked ſcandal, that the Devil and the World, which know not God, had raiſed of him, they would ſoon cry out, that they would not for a world but that they had been at his houſe, and that they have cauſe to bleſs God for the day that ever they knew ſuch and ſuch who brought them acquainted with ſuch a friend; they will never while they live, for the future, believe any thing that is ſpoken againſt God or Chriſt, let who will ſpeak it. Is this the God they had ſuch hard thoughts of? Is the kindneſs that they did ſo ſlight? Is this the friend that they were ſo loath to come to? And thus an ingenious ſoul will even be aſhamed that it ſhould ever harbour ſuch low thoughts of him, whom now to their comfort they have found beyond apprehenſion kind. Believe it Sirs, you can't conceive what a friend you ſhall have of God, would you but be perſwaded to enter into Covenant with him, to be his, wholly his; I tell you mony, that did

ſomtimes think, and do as you do now, this is, ſet light by Chriſt and hate *God*, and ſaw no lovelineſs in him, are now quite of another mind, they would not for ten thouſand worlds quit their intereſt in him. O who dare ſay that he is a hard maſter? Who that knows him, will ſay he is an unkind friend? O what do poor creatures ail that they do entertain ſuch harſh, ſower thoughts of *God*? What, do you think there is nothing in that Scripture, *Pſal.* 31. 19. *O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee*! Doth the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeak too largely? Doth he ſay more then he and others could prove? Ask him, and he will tell you in *verſ.* 21. that he bleſſeth *God* theſe were things he could ſpeak to, from his own perſonal exprience, and many thouſands as well as he, to whom the Lord hath ſhewed his marvellous kindneſs; and therefore he doth very paſſionately plead with the people of *God* to love him, and more highly to expreſs their ſenſe of his goodneſs, that the world might be encouraged alſo to have good thoughts of him. What Nation under Heaven can ſay they have not taſted of his goodneſs, *Pſal.* 33. 5. *All the earth is full of the goodneſs of the Lord.* Read over the hundred forty fifth *Pſalm*, and let us hear then what you have to ſay againſt *God*. Some indeed may ſpeak of the might of *Gods* terrible acts; ſome that have deſpiſed his love, have felt his power and juſtice; as for theſe we cannot think them competent Judges, in this caſe; they will not, it may be, commend *Gods* goodneſs: yet even they cannot, will not condemn *God* of injuſtice, but exclaim againſt themſelves for their unſpeakable folly in ſlighting

ing his kindneſs when it was tendered to them. But as for others, ask them, and they will declare the goodneſs of God, they will abundantly utter the memory of his great goodneſs, and ſing of his righteouſneſs. Do but try poor ſinner, do but try, come a little nearer, and believe your own experience; and if after a thorow knowledge of God, and a real acquaintance with him, you can ſay that his favour is not to be ſought after, his love not worth the deſiring; why then I have done, I have no more to ſay. I am ſure if God were, as the Devil and the world repreſent him to be; in ſo many thouſand of years, among ſo many thouſands and millions that have been acquainted with him, and entertained by him, ſome of them would have complained before this, we ſhould at one time or other have heard ſomthing againſt him. Now I challenge all the world to produce me but an experienced ſolid Saint, that when he acted like himſelf, and after he had been in the company of God, and had been feaſted by him, could ſay that he kept a ſhort houſe, eſpecially could we but enquire of thoſe that ſit down at his Table, and are always in his preſence; which of them all have a word to ſay againſt him? but of that more hereafter. No, no, it is in ſinners themſelves, there lies the fault; they believe the malicious father of lyes, they eaſily credit the unexperienced ignorant world: and how little reaſon you have to believe ſo malicious enemies before the Word of Truth, I leave your ſelves to determine. O why will you take up a ſlander againſt your Creator ſo eaſily? Why will you receive ſuch great things wherein your eternal welfare is con-

concerned upon truſt? Do but ſearch diligently, turn over the Bible, conſult the experiences of wiſer men, and ſee whether things be not as I tell you. And how doth the matter ſtand now poor heart? what muſt the Devil be believed before God? what is God a hard maſter ſtill? of all the Creatures in the world, ſome of you have little reaſon to ſay ſo. Haſt thou not been fed, cloathed, and delivered a thouſand times by him? Who is it that provided ſo richly for you? Who filled your barns? Who reſtored your health at ſuch & ſuch a time, when the Doctor gave you over? Was that one of his unkindneſſes? Are theſe the things for which you ſlight him? God himſelf makes a challenge in *Jer.* 2 5 *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, & have walked after vanity, and become vain? neither ſaid they, where is the God that brought us out of the land of Egypt, and let us through the wilderneſs, through a land of deſert and pits, through a land of drought, and of the ſhadow of death, where no man dwelt: and I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof, & the goodneſs thereof, and yet you know not me, ſaith the Lord.* Was there ever ſuch ingratitude heard of? *Paſs ye over the Iſles of chittim, and ſend unto Kedar, and conſider diligently, and ſee if there be ſuch a thing: hath a nation changed their gods? but my people hath changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* And what ſayſt thou, O ungrateful *Iſrael?* have the Heathens more reaſon to cleave to their idols? Are the Pagans more beholding to their ſtocks and ſtones then thou art to the living God? And now what haſt thou got by all this? haſt thou increaſed thy riches? Are thy barns more full of Corn? Are there ever

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the more Cattel in thy Paſtures? Are thy Preſſes more full of Grapes? Art thou not now grown poor? Is not the Heaven become as Braſs, and the Earth as Iron? Do not thy Catten groan for want of food? Are not thy Vines and Fields grown barren? Why, you may thank your ſelves for all this; you did not know when you were well. Return therefore, O backſliding *Iſrael*, and thou ſhalt know the difference between my ſervice, and the ſervice of Devils, *Jer.* 2 30, 31. Let me therefore again plead with thee, O God-deſpiſing ſinner. If for all this thou wilt not be perſwaded, let me expoſtulate the caſe with thee, as God did with *Iſrael*. Did not God bring thee into a world every way furniſhed for thy uſe? Hath he not ſubjected the Creatures of the world to thee? Who waters thy Fields out of his treaſuries? Who opens the clods of the Earth, and ſends thee out of his ſtore-houſe proviſions year by year? What would quickly become of thee, if thou hadſt not a freſh ſuppy from him every year, nay, every moment? O, is this his unkindneſs for which thou hateſt him? And it is for this that thou haſt ſuch ſower thoughts of him? And if all this were too little, he would do greater things then theſe; hath he not ſent his Son out of his boſom? Doth he not offer thee Heaven and Glory? What canſt thou in reaſon ask, that is good for thee, that he would deny thee, if thou wouldſt but be acquainted with him? And if this be an unkind friend, I do not know who is kind: if this be not love, I know not what is. What could he have done more to expreſs his love to the world then he hath done, *Iſa.* 44. Ask *David* what he thinks of God;

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he was well acquainted with him, he dwelt in his houſe, and by his good will would he never out of his more immediate preſence, and company: enquire, I pray, what he found amiſs in him? That you may know his mind the better, he hath left it upon Record in more then one or two places, what a friend he hath had of God, *Pſal.* 16.6. *The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Why, what is that you boaſt of ſo much, O *David!* have not others had Kingdoms as well as you? No, that's not the thing, a Crown is one of the leaſt Jewels in my Cabinet, *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.* So in *Pſal.* 23. quite through. Nay, doth he not ſometimes come out and beckon to the poor beggarly ſtarved world, to come and eat their fill of the ſame diſh; *O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good,* Pſal. 34 8. If you will give any credit to his word, he will tell you, *No friend like to God,* Pſal. 73.25,26,27, 28. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in earth that I can deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from him ſhall periſh: Thou haſt deſtroyed all them that go a whoring from thee; but it is good for me to draw near to God.* Let others think, or do as they pleaſe, as for him he values *the light of Gods countenance above corn, and wine, and oyl, Pſal.* 4.6,7. 1 *Joh.* 3.1. *Cant.* 1 4. And what ſayſt thou now poor creature? Art thou ſtill of the ſame mind? Wilt thou have God for thy God and Friend, or no? Is he good and kind, or not? Is his favour worth the deſiring and ſeeking after? *Pſal.* 94. 8. *Underſtand O ye brutiſh among the people, and ye fools when will you be wiſe:*

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If God himself may not be believed, if *David* his servant may not be credited, hear what one of your brethren, a Heathen I mean, saith in this case. I shall translate his words into English; they are as follows: *The goodness and providence of God to man is so great, that if he were wise in his ways, he would do nothing publickly or privately, but praise God, and speak well of his name*, Ar. Epic. l. 1. c. 16. Doth it not become man, while he his plowing, and digging, and eating, &c. to be singing, *Great is that God that hath given us land to till, instruments to work with; great is that God who hath given us hands and feet, and other members, above all, that he hath given us an understanding soul?* And seeing most men are blind in these things, is it not fit that some that are more wise and able should publickly praise God for all these things? and now I am a lame old man, but partaker of Reason, God is to be praised by me, this is my work, and this I will do, and I will not leave this station as long as I live; and I wish that all the world would joyn with me in singing a song of thankfulness to this good God. Hear what a testimony he gives of the goodness of God; Hark how he invites you to joyn in that sweet consort of singing praises to your Maker: hark at what a rate he talks, that never read a Bible, or heard of a Christ, or knew what this acquaintance with God that I am speaking of, meant; how bravely doth he set out the goodness of God? What say you, will you yet be perswaded to think well of God? Methinks I am loath to see my good master thus slighted and undervalued; methinks it grieves me to see thee too, so foolishly to refuse such an offer. I shall conclude what I have to say upon

this head, with another notable expreſſion of the ſame divine and God-admiring *Stoick*, *Idem c. 6. If men would ſtudy the nature of things, and had but grateful minds, they might ſee cauſe ſufficient to praiſe God from every creature in the world.* It is not therefore becauſe God hath no goodneſs or beauty in him, that men do no more earneſtly deſire acquaintance with him; but becauſe their eyes are ſhut, or they look upon him through a wrong perſpective. This is the firſt qualification of this Friend, which may command his acquaintance to you, that he is the moſt loving and good Friend.

Secondly, He is a moſt comfortable Friend. It is a vulgar, and yet a dangerous errour, which the Devil would fain keep up the credit of, That a Religious life is a ſad, melancholy, penſive life; and that upon our acquaintance with God, we muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to joy, pleaſure, and comforts. And is it true, that a Chriſtians life is ſo uncomfortable a life? What then doth *David* mean to take his Harp ſo oft in his hand? What makes him ſo frequently to warble out thoſe melodious Notes? How ſeldom is his Viol out of tune? Why is he ſo oft ſinging and rejoycing? Read the laſt *Pſalms* at your leiſure, and then tell me whether that be the language of a ſad mournful melancholy man? Do you never hear him ſpeak of God, his exceeding joy? Doth he not tell God plainly ſometimes, that he can ſcarce reliſh any thing but that which comes from his Table? Nothing elſe can comfort him. Hence it is in *Pſal.* 119.76,77. that he puts up this earneſt requeſt to God; *Let I pray thee, thy merciful kindneſs be for my comfort.*

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As for his part he could take comfort in nothing below that, and that was it that the Lord had graciouſly promiſed to feed his ſervant with, as long as he lived; whereupon he urges God with his promiſe, *According to thy word unto thy ſervant.* And that none might think this to be only Gods common kindneſs that he means, he adds, *Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live.* Gods common mercies would not ſerve his turn, that was a Diſh that the World fed upon as well as he; if he might not have theſe ſweet dainties, peculiar, ſpiritual, fatherly mercies, he could not live, he ſhould even pine away for hunger. Wherefore he ſaith a little after, *That his ſoul did even faint for Gods ſalvation.* And the ſoul that hath had a full meal here; O how is it raiſed? How doth it cry roaſt-meat, *Cant.* 4. 1. *The King hath brought me into his chambers*; and what had you there? nay, that's more then the ſoul can expreſs; only this ſhe can ſay, *The taſte of that mercy, ſhe hopes to keep in her mouth for ever; ſhe ſhall remember his love more then wine.* Nay, ſo comfortable a Friend is God, that thoſe who have an intereſt in him can rejoyce in ſuch times, when others would be weeping and wringing their hands. Gods company is ſo refreſhing, that it turns a priſon into a palace; it brings joy and pleaſure into a dungeon. Stand forth O ye ſuffering Saints, and ſpeak your experiences; the world objects your ſtate to us a ſad ſtate, and they think you have good reaſon to accuſe God, and if any have any thing to ſay againſt the comfortableneſs of a religious life, and this friend, it is you. Well then, will you promiſe, O ſinners, to ſtand to the judgement of the greateſt ſufferers?

ſufferers. We will enquire of them that have been ſawn aſunder, tormented, roaſted for Gods ſake; look into that little *Book of Martyrs*, and you ſhall find as uncomfortable as their ſtate was, yet they would not accept of deliverance; none of them all that would open his mouth againſt this Friend for all this. What ſay you, O *Paul* and *Silas*, now your backs are raw, and your feet are in the ſtocks? their ſinging ſpeaks ſignificantly enough for them that they were not over ſad; and they are ſo buſie in crying *Hallelujahs*, that they can't attend to give an anſwer to ſo ſorry a queſtion. What ſay the *Martyrs* out of the Flames. Doth not their love burn as hot then as ever? Did ever any of them from *Abel* to the leaſt that ſuffered in Chriſts cauſe, ſay that God was an uncomfortable Friend? Do not all the children of *Wiſdom*, from firſt to laſt juſtifie *Wiſdom*, and ſay, *That all her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths, peace?* Of thoſe that have God for their Friend and know it, bring me any of them all that complains of God. How doth he come and chear them up when all the world is againſt them? *Joh.* 16. 33. What made that Holy Man in *Pſal* 23. ſay, *That though he ſhould walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, he would fear no evil.* What, not fear then? Why, what Friend is it that keeps up your ſpirits? that bares you company in that black and diſmal Regions; he will ſoon tell you God was with him, and in thoſe ſlippery ways he lean'd upon his ſtaff, and theſe were the Cordials that kept his heart from fainting. I challenge all the Gallants in the world out of all their Merry Jovial Clubs, to find ſuch a company of merry chearful

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Creatures as the friends of God are. 'Tis not the company of God, but the want of it that makes ſad. Alas, you know not what their comforts be; and ſtrangers intermeddle not with their joy. You think they can't be merry when their countenance is ſo grave, but they are ſure you can't be truly merry when you ſmile with a curſe upon your ſouls. They know that he ſpoke that ſentence who could not be miſtaken, *Prov.* 14 13. *Even in laughter the heart is ſorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heavineſs.* Then call your roaring, and your ſinging, and laughter mirth, but the Spirit of God calls it madneſs, *Eccl.* 2 2. When a carnal mans heart is ready to die within him, and with *Nabal* to become like a ſtone; how chearfully then can thoſe look that have God for their friend! Which of the valiant ones of the world can outface Death, look joyfully into Eternity? Which of them can hug a Faggot, embrace the Flames? This the Saint can do, and more too; for he can look infinite Juſtice in the face with a chearful heart, he can hear of Hell with joy and thankfulneſs, he can think of the day of Judgment with great delight and comfort. I again challenge all the world to produce one out of all their merry Companies, one that can do all this; come muſter up all your jovial Blades together; call for your Harps and Viols, add what you will to make the conſort compleat; bring in your richeſt Wines; come lay your heads together, and ſtudy what may ſtill add to your comfort; well, is it done? Now come away ſinner, this night thy ſoul muſt appear before God. Well now, what ſay you man? What, doth your courage fail you? Now call for your merry

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Companions, and let them chear thy heart. Now call for a Cup, a Whore, never be daunted man; ſhall one of thy courage quail, that could make a mock at the threatnings of the Almighty *God*? what ſo boon and jolly but now, and now down in the mouth? Here's 'a ſudden change indeed! Where's thy merry companions. I ſay again? all fled! Where are thy darling pleaſures? have all forſaken thee? Why ſhouldeſt thou be dejected, there's a poor man in rags that's ſmiling? What, art thou quite bereft of all comfort? What's the matter man? What's the matter? There's a queſtion with all my heart, to ask a man that muſt appear before a *God* to morrow morning. Well then, it ſeems your heart miſgives you, what then did you mean to talk of joy and pleaſures? are they all come to this? Why, there ſtands one that now hath his heart as full of comfort as ever it can hold; and the very thoughts of Eternity, which do ſo daunt your ſoul, raiſe his; and would you know the reaſon? he knows he is going to his friend, nay, his friend bears him company thorow that dirty Lane. Behold, how good and how pleaſant a thing it is for *God* and the ſoul to dwell together in unity! This 'tis to have *God* for a friend. *O bleſſed is the ſoul that is in ſuch a caſe; yea, bleſſed is the ſoul whoſe God is the Lord*, Pſal. 144. 15. Pſal. 69. 15, 16 2 Cor. 1. 3. Joh. 14 16. Iſa. 51. 11, 12, Neh. 8. 10. Pſal. 30. 5. Pſal. 43. 4. Prov. 14. 10. Iſa. 29. 19. Rom. 14. 17, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Nay, *David* when he ſeem'd to be ſomewhat out of tune, leaves this upon Record as undoubted truth, *Pſal. 73. 1. That God is good to Iſrael, even to ſuch as are of a clean heart*; Let the Devil and his

his Inſtruments ſay what they will to the contrary, I will never believe them; I have ſaid it before, and I ſee no reaſon to reverſe my ſentence; Truly God is good. Though ſomtimes he may hide his face for a while, yet he doth that in faithfulneſs, and love; there is kindneſs in his very ſcourges, and love bound up in his rods; he is good to *Iſrael*: do but mark it firſt or laſt, *The true Iſraelite in whom there is no guile, ſhall be refreſhed by this Saviour.* The *Iſraelite* that wreſtles with tears with God, and values his love above the whole world, that will not be put off without his Fathers bleſſing, he ſhall have it with a witneſs; *He ſhall reap in joy, though he may at preſent ſow in tears. Even to ſuch as are of a clean heart.* The falſe-hearted hypocrite indeed that gives God only his tongue and lip, cap and knee, but reſerves his heart and love for ſin and the world, that hath much of complement, but nothing of affection and reality; why, let ſuch a one never expect, while in ſuch a ſtate, to taſte thoſe reviving comforts that I have been treating of: while he drives ſuch a trade, he muſt not expect much of Gods company; but of that hereafter. What a charge doth God give to his Miniſters to keep up the ſpirits of his people. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,* ſaith their God, *ſpeak ye comfortably to Jeruſalem.* It's a groſs miſtake, to think that God loves to ſee his, drooping and hanging down their heads; no, no, he counts it his honour to have his ſervants chearful. O why then ſhould any of the precious ſons and daughters of *Zion* walk up and down, as if their friends company were not ſufficient to ſolace them, even in the loweſt ſtate that a child of

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God can be conceived to be in. While you think God is honoured by you, you can't imagine what wrong you do him. The world ſtands by and looks upon you, the Devil bids them look on ſtill, and ask them, how they like ſuch a dumpiſh life, and the ſervice of ſuch a Maſter, all whoſe ſervants and friends lead ſuch a doleful life. Stay, hold theſe Satan, that's a lye, and a loud one too; there are and have been thouſands of Gods Children that have lived, as it were in the Suburbs of Heaven, while they have been upon Earth; many thouſands there have been, that have ſpent their days in true ſolid joy and peace; many that have gone from one Heaven of comfort here, to another of glory and comfort in that other world. As I ſaid before, ſo I ſay again, It is not the company of God, but the want of it, makes thoſe ſad which you ſee ſo; beſides, let me tell you, tears and joy are no way inconſiſtent. It may be alſo thoſe tears, that ſad countenance may be for thy ſake; when he ſees what comfort thou deſpiſeſt, and knows what a God, what a Friend thou refuſeſt, he can't but weep; it's no rarity for the people of God in the midſt of their ſpiritual enjoyments to pity poor fooliſh ſinners, that ſlight thoſe things which they know to be ſo refreſhing: Thus *David* did when his heart was ſolaced with the love of God, when his ſoul was ready to be over-burdened, over-powered with the abundant incomes of Gods kindneſs, he can't but with grief and pity think of their ſtate, who have nothing to live upon but huſks, whileſt he feeds thus high. O let my ſoul be but acquainted with God, let me but taſte more of thoſe true comforts, drink of that

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river of pleaſures that is at his right hand, and then I could ſpare theſe lower ſenſual pleaſures, then I ſhould ſcarce envy the moſt merry ranting Blades their comforts; I will not ſay but then I ſhould with ſorrow think of their wants. It was ſpoken by *Galeacius Caraxiola*, one that ſometimes had none of the leaſt ſhares of worldly enjoyments, and might have had more, could he have diſpenſed with the abſence of this friend, could he but have been willing to have wanted thoſe ſpiritual comforts. *Let him periſh that values not one hours communion with God, and the comforts of a divine life, above all the pleaſures and comforts that the earth can afford.* Give me ſuch comforts, ſuch a friend, whoſe ſmiles may refreſh me upon a death-bed, whoſe preſence may revive me when nothing elſe can. *Naturaliſts* tells us of a Bird call'd *Charadius*, that being brought into the room where any one lieth ſick, if he look upon the ſick perſon with a fixed eye, he recovereth, but if he turn away his eyes, the perſon dies. It is true, I am ſure, of this friend, in whoſe favour is life, and in whoſe frowns there is death. [*Ar. Epic. l.3.cap.24.*] *Can you help me to ſuch a friend* (may all ſay with as good reaſon as he) *that can keep me from all fears.* O for ſuch a friend! This is inſtead of all pleaſures to me, to think that God is my Father, and to know that I have loved and obeyed him to the utmoſt of my power, not only in words but in deeds; this, this is the pleaſure, here's a friend indeed. Now what do you ſay to all this, is God to be deſired? Is his acquaintance to be ſought after? Can ſuch a friend be too much valued? The truth of it is, I would not give a ruſh for any of your comforts which come

not from a ſenſe of our intereſt in Chriſt, and which have not a ſolid foundation, Scripture-conſolations. It is not he that ſmiles, but he that can look up to God as his, and look into his ſoul, and ſee things there in a good compoſure, and kept in a chearful ſubjection to his maker and Redeemer; this, this is the ſtate, here dwells joys, and comforts that deſerve ſuch a name. This lower Region ſometimes is ſtormy, but above there is a conſtant calm. *Sen.* And is God ſtill to be ſlighted? are his favours, is his acquaintance little worth? I know you can't be an enemy to comfort and joys; why, let me tell you here's the Well of Conſolation, here's the Fountain, and all other joys which are drawn out of the Ciſterns will ere long be dry. Come away therefore, poor ſoul, and do not refuſe ſuch joys as all the carnal world can't parallel for their hearts. And this is the next *Motive*, taken from the conſideration of the Nature of this Friend, which I would perſwade you to get acquainted with.

Firſt, He is a loving and kind Friend.

Secondly, He is the moſt chearing, comforting Friend.

Thirdly, He is the moſt able and powerful Friend. He hath all power in his hand; and as long as he is but thy Friend, who ere is thy Foe, thou ſhalt never be overpowred, never be cruſhed. Thou mayſt challenge all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon earth to do their worſt, God is on thy ſide, thou needſt not fear. Thou art in thy ſelf a poor weak Creature, eaſily conquered and broken by a thouſand enemies; but if thou haſt a God to fly to, thou alſo mayeſt

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ſing as well as thoſe did, Iſa. 26. 1. *Thou haſt a ſtrong City, ſalvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks.* No wonder then, if every wiſe man think it abundantly worth his while to ſecure this great Priviledg to himſelf that God may be his friend; This is his beſt hold, his *One thing neceſſary*, verſe 4. One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after; that I may dwell in the houſe of God all the dayes of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.

Sin, the World, and the Devil, may tempt a ſinner, but they can never guard him from the power of this Great and Almighty God.

And now, you that are contented to live as without God in the world, let me requeſt you to conſider:

Canſt thou ſpread out the Heavens as a curtain, or cover the Sun with darkneſs? Canſt thou call to the Lightnings, and will they anſwer thee, and ſay, here we are? Shouldſt thou ſpeak to that haſty Champion, and command him to ſtand ſtill one quarter of an hour, would he obey thee? If theſe things be too much, why doſt thou boaſt, ſhat art but a worm? Alas poor ſinner, when this great God appears in judgment, thou art not able to deal with a Fly or a Frogg.

O then, Is it not good prudence for all the ſons of men, to come and agree quickly with this Adverſary while he is in the way, for *whoever* goes on in an Enmity and Rebellion againſt this Lord of Heaven and Earth, ſhall not proſper, but be ſure his ſin ſhall find him out.

And this is another qualification of this Friend which I would commend to your acquaintance,

he is an able Friend.

First, he is the moſt kind and loving Friend.

Secondly, he is the moſt comfortable Friend.

Thirdly, he is the moſt able and powerful Friend.

Fourthly, he is the moſt active Friend: He commands his to be diligent and induſtrious, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord, ſurely he will not be ſlow.

If the inanimate creature, ſuch as the ſinner, reſolveth as a ſtrong man to run his race; how active then muſt the maker of that ſinner be, if he command him not to deal with a ſlack hand, ſurely he himſelf will not deal with a ſlack hand, ſhould you behold this friend of yours riding upon the wings of the Wind, and making the clouds his Chariot, would you not ſay, O how ſwift, O how active is this glorious friend of mine! the feet of this beloved One are as Hinds feet, for the good of his friends. Yea, *his very eyes run too and fro through the whole world*; for their good he keeps conſtant watch and ward about them, and he that can injure any of his out of his ſight ſhall go unpuniſhed, *Eſa.* 27. 3.

The Lord ſpeaks this under the Metaphor of a *Vine-Yard*, and doth this great Husbandman neglect his *Vineyard*? doth he not Digg, Manure, and ſtone it, and keep out the *wilde* Boar, and Foxes? Doth he not prune it, and tender it charily? I the Lord do keep it night and day, none ſhall come into it to gather the Fruit of it without my leave. I will water it every moment: So that you ſee what pains God takes for his. Do you believe, this friend ſits in Heaven, and looks down upon the Earth for nothing? Be not deceived

deceived O ſinner, that wilt not be perſwaded to get reconſiliation with this Great and Holy Majeſty. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his coming, as ſome account ſlackneſs:* Let his ſtay be never ſo long, when he comes to judg the world, it will be before the ſinner looks for him. Indeed there is nothing that a *wicked man* more pleaſeth himſelf with, than the thoughts that it will be a long time before *God* and he meet, but he little conſiders that *a Thouſand years are but as One day* compared to the dayes of Eternity. Now, by faith, theſe things are made real to the conſiderate Chriſtian; and as for the ſupplying of his wants, he knows if he comes at midnight to borrow bread of him, he will not put you off with this excuſe, that he is a Bed and cannot riſe from his Children, but will preſently help, makeing their neceſſity his own opportunity to give them what ſhall be convenient for them, as knowing, that let the wind ſit in what corner it will, it ſhall fit their Sails, and bring them nearer the Harbour.

The worlds friends, are infinitely below this Friend: One hath choſen Silver and Gold, and a great Eſtate, and ſuch a one in the worlds Kalender may be writ down for one of the wiſeſt in his Choyce: Well, lets us ſee now what this friend can do for you, your body is on the Rack, your hands are weak, your leggs tremble, your ſtomach fails, your ſleep departs from you; Where is now your friend? call for him ſpeedily, come let us now ſee if he be a friend indeed, let us ſee it, can he give you one hours ſleep, can he help you to one moments reſt, can he give you no refreſhment no help? Take him, lay him by you on your

O its ſo heavy I cannot endure it: lay it in your boſome, O, I cannot breath for it; take it away, take it away, it will not do; why Sir, do you know what you ſay? It is your old friend which you valued above God himſelf; it is a bag of gold; I know it, I know it, it preſſes me down; it is ſo heavy I cannot bear it, away with it, away with it, And is this the friend you prized ſo very highly? Is this all, the kindneſs that he hath for you now? is this all the help he can give you at ſuch a time when a friend ſhould ſtand one in ſome ſtead? Were you not told as much long ago, how you ſhould be ſerved at laſt?

Fifthly, He is the moſt Humble and Condeſcending Friend, he doth not ſcorn to be acquainted with the meaneſt, the Beggar may be as welcome to him as the Prince: The Poor and Rich are all one to Him, he takes as much notice of *Job* on the Dunghill, as *David* on the Throne: He knows any of his Friends in Raggs, as well as in Silks; in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, as well as in Scarlet and fine Linnen.

Look up poor Creature, and ſee what a Priviledg thou haſt, God himſelf the King of Glory is willing to be acquainted with thee; what ſayeſt thou to this? Doth not thy Heart leap within *thee for joy, when you conſider the* Infinite Goodneſs of God, *that Reveals* theſe things to *Babes, which are hid from the Wiſe and Prudent: Even ſo Father, for it hath ſeem'd good in thy Eyes.* That's a ſtrong Expreſſion; yet he ſpoke it that cannot Lie: Therefore, O you Humble Ones, that value the Favour of this Friend, Hear and Read it, and make the Beſt of it: It's Yours; feed upon it: It's a

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ſweet bit indeed, *Iſ.* 66. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my foot ſtool; where is the houſe that ye will build me, and where is the place of my reſt? for all theſe things hath mine hand made, and all thoſe things have been, ſaith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* I ſhall have occaſion hereafter, a little to open theſe words under another *Head*, wherefore I ſhall now but name it. O what encouragement is here for the moſt deſpicable Creature in the world, that may be as happy in the acquaintance with God, as the mightieſt Lord in the World. Here's one that will not be aſhamed to own thee, when others will take little notice of thee. Thou thinkeſt theſe things ſtrange, it may be, and ſo they be indeed, but yet not more ſtrange then true. In doth not a little engage the affections of the meaner rank, if a perſon of quality do but give them a kind look; eſpecially if they may have freedom of acceſs to him, O what a priviledg they count it; but ſuch a one to undertake the whole managing of a poor mans affairs, for him to come to his houſe, and to look into his cupboard, and to take care of ſupplying all his wants, and coming frequently to him, and ſupping with him, and he with him, and to make a great proviſion for him as if he were a Prince; where is ſuch a thing as this heard of? but if ſuch a thing were, it were a light matter in compariſon of what I am ſpeaking? Where do we ever read of a great Kings ſending Embaſſador after Embaſſador to a poor beggar? What hiſtory doth record ſuch a ſtory at this, that a great Monarch ſhould make earneſt ſuit for many

years together to a worthleſs ſlave, that he can hang when he will, that hath not a rag to her back, to make her his *Queen*; this is rare indeed, this is beyond preſident among men; but yet it is that which the great God doth not diſdain to do; Nay, let me tell thee whoſoever thou art remaining in a ſtate of Nature, that readeſt theſe lines, that at this very time God is doing no leſs then all this comes to for thee; and I in the name of my great Maſter do come to expoſtulate the caſe with thee; that God that gave thee thy breath, and can take it away as ſoon as he pleaſeth; that God that made heaven and earth, to whom all the Nations of the earth are but as the drop of a bucket to the vaſt Ocean, who holdeth the Sea in the hollow of his hands, that weigheth the mountains in ſcales, and the hils in a ballance: that God that hath no leſs then a heaven to reward with, and a hell and everlaſting flames to puniſh with, he it is, that doth by me beſeech thee to be reconciled unto him, he it is that would be your Friend, your Acquaintance. O unheard of mercy! O infinite and unparallel'd condeſcention! I have oft thought there are two great aſtoniſhing wonders in the world, The one is Gods infinite mercy and condeſcention to rebellious apoſtatized man; and the other is mans inſenſibility and ingratitude; that there needs ſuch a ſtir, and ſo many words to perſwade him to cloſe with this wonder of kindneſs, and that ſo very few ſhould be prevailed with. See this ſet forth to the life in *Ezek.* 16. *Iſa.* 1. 2, 3. *Pſal.* 11. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth him-*

himſelf to behold the things that are in heaven, and the things that are in the earth: he raiſeth up the poor out of the duſt, and lifted the needy out of the dunghill, that he may ſit with Princes, &c. The *Pſalmiſt* therefore had no ſmall reaſon to cry out with admiration, *Pſal.* 8. 4. *What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him? What is man that thou takeſt knowledge of him, or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him?* Pſal. 144. 3. Job 17. 17, 18. *What is man that thou ſhouldeſt magnifie him, and that thou ſhouldeſt ſet thy heart upon him, and that thou ſhouldeſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?* Behold his Majeſty, and yet how he ſtoops? Nahum 1. 4. Pſal. 18. Job 37, 38. an 39 Chapters, Iſa. 40. Pſal. 138. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet hath he reſpect unto the lowly: but the proud he knows afar off.* That which (*Seneca, Epiſt.* 17.) the Moraliſt ſpeaks of Wiſdom may be ſaid of God, *Epiſt.* 61. *It is lawful to come to him without rich attire and great attendance, come naked and you ſhall be as kindly entertained, as if you did ſhine in cloth of gold, and were beſparkled with Diamonds. He will not give freer acceſs to the rich then the poor, neither doth he value a ſtrong healthful perſon, before a ſick and crazie one, a beautiful and well-trimm'd gallant before a cankered, old, deformed creature.* Thus far *Seneca* and the Scripture ſpeaks the ſame language. Neither *Job's* boyls, nor *Lazarus*'s ſores made God keep ever the further off from them. I knew one all of a cleave with the ſmall Pox, whom this friend came to viſit, and in that condition, how many kiſſes, had that ſweet creature from God? O it would do ones heart good to have ſuch a friend! And this

is the next qualification of this Friend, which may commend him to thy acquaintance, be thou never ſo poor, never ſo vile and ſinful in thy own eyes, ſuch as thy ſelf he hath made welcome; and upon his Word, wilt thou but come away ſpeedily, thou ſhalt be welcome too.

Sixthly, He is the moſt Faithful friend. Where is the man that can tax him of the leaſt unfaithfulneſs? Which is the man that can ſay that he ever forſook any of his in their greateſt exigency? he hath been truſted more then once with more then the world is worth a thouſand times over; and they which truſted him moſt, never accuſeth, never thought their choiſeſt Jewels, their whole eſtate could be left in ſafer hands; his promiſe, and his performance have kept touch, he never failed his in the leaſt punctilio, or circumſtance of time. Ask *Abraham*, who was one of Gods friends, God tells him that his ſeed ſhall inherit *Canaan*, and that they ſhall be ſtrangers in a Land that was not theirs four hundered years; and did he not at the expiring of that time, though it was at midnight almoſt, bring them out of *Egypt*: God keeps his time with them to a minute. Ask *Joſhua* whether he did not live to ſee this promiſe made good? inquire of *David*, and he will tell you again, that no friend is ſo truſty. The unfaithfulneſs is on mans ſide there indeed, there I ſay is many an unhandſome thing done, and yet for all God doth not (as you ſhall hear hereafter) preſently break with them; if they forget that they are Children, he will not forget that he is their Father; if God ſhould have done thus by them, many thouſands of them that are now in Glory had been ſomewhere elſe. He promiſeth indeed

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great things unto his Friend; but do's he not do as he ſaith, if not in the very thing, yet in that which is better; and who would account himſelf wronged, if one that promiſed him ten pound in ſilver, ſhould in the ſtead of it give him ten thouſand pound in Gold and Jewels; I believe ſuch a one would not be thought to be worſe then his word, nor the perſon to whom he made this promiſe, count himſelf injured. And this God doth frequently, did men but underſtand the worth of what God pays them with. It may be God doth not cloath them in Silks and Sattins, (neither do I know that he ever promiſed to do ſo) but yet he cloaths them with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and beſtows thoſe glorious robes upon them, in which they look more trim and neat then in cloaths of Gold; he hath made him ſuch a Suit that is the handſomer for the much wearing; he may eat and drink, ſleep, and work in it, and keep it on his back day and night, and it ſhall not be wrinkled; it is the better for uſe: He is a faithfull Friend, and none that ever had to do with him can ſay any thing to the contrary; he never forgot any buſineſs that any of his Friends deſired him to do for them, he never neglected it, or did it by the halves; where did any of them come to him to reveal ſome ſecret loathſome diſtemper to him, that he reproached them with it? To which of them did he promiſe a heaven, and put them off with this World: when this Pilot undertakes to ſteer their courſe, there their veſſel ſhall never ſplit upon the Rock, run upon the Sands, or ſpring a Leak, ſo as to ſink in the Seas, to be ſure he will ſee them ſafe in the harbour. *Ar. Epiſt. l. c.* 26. He was no Chriſtian, yet I ſuppoſe none will

deny but he ſpake good Divinity, who ſaid, *If a man will chooſe God for his Friend, he ſhall travel ſecurely through a Wilderneſs that hath many beaſts of prey in it, he ſhall paſs ſafely through this World, for he only is ſafe that hath God for his guide.* Doth he not ſpeak a little like *David* himſelf, *Pſal.* 37. 26. Who never expected to come to glory, except he were guided by his counſel! Now if a poor Heathen could ſay thus, and ſee good reaſon to truſt God, and admire his Faithfulneſs as he doth frequently; and ſo doth *Seneca*, juſtifying Gods Faithfulneſs in all his dealings with the beſt men in all their ſufferings, and the proſperity of the wicked; what then ſhall the heavenly Chriſtian ſay, who hath experienced ſo much of Gods faithfulneſs in anſwering his Prayers, in fulfilling his promiſes, and ſupplying all his exigencies. *David* will tell you as much, and juſtifie God in his moſt ſevere diſpenſations towards him: *In very Faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me*, *Pſal.* 119. 75. In our earthly and bodily affairs, we ſhould never count that Phyſitian faithful that will rather open a vein, or put his Patient to exquiſite torture to ſave his life, then let him dye eaſily. We believe a Father may whip his ſtubborn Child with more love then let him alone. To prevent the ax or halter with a rod, is no cruelty. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, *Prov.* 27, 6. It was not for nothing that the Pſalmiſt ſticks ſo cloſe to god, he had a little experience of the unfaithfulneſs of other friends, *Pſal.* 38. 9, 11. *His Lovers and his Friends ſtood aloof from his ſore, and his Kinſmen ſtood afar off.* May not a great many complain as well as *Job*, *That their Brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the ſtream of brooks they paſs away.*

away, Job 6.15. A friend may forget one, a brother may disown one, father and mother may cast one off, but here's a friend that sticks closer then all. Nay, he is a better friend to his then they are to themselves; when they love themselves so little as to undo themselves, he loved them so well as to save them; when they loved themselves, so as to poison themselves; he loved them, so as to give them a powerful Antidote; when they like children would have the knife, he takes it out of their hands least they should cut their fingers; when they are so careless as to surfit themselves, he is so faithful as to keep them short, and diet them; and all this I hope they that understand themselves will not call unkindness or infidelity. *David* had in his time some friends that made no bones of hazarding their lives for him; some of them were willing to quench his thirst though with their blood, and yet for all that in all his life he never met with so faithfull a friend as his God, *Psal.89.8. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?* He had rather trust his God then any of them all. God is a real true faithful Friend; he tells us things as they be; he doth not speak of more things then the nature of them doth require; he doth not tell the best, and hide the worst; he doth not speak all of Heaven, and nothing of suffering, but saith plainly, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, they must suffer persecution: and Christ saith, Those that will be his Disciples, must take up their Cross and follow him, and that through many tribulations, they must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. He speaks of sowing in tears, as well as reaping in joy; of

fliction as well as glory. And when he ſpeaks of the glory of another world, he doth not too highly advance his excellency. When he ſpeaks of his Wrath, or Hell, or Sin, he doth not make them greater evils then they be. The Lord is faithful in all his dealings, and that they which love him, know right well. Whatſoever doth happen in the world, doth happen juſtly and faithfully; and ſo if thou wilt but well obſerve, thou ſhalt find. And what ſayeſt thou after all this, thou who haſt tried many and many a friend, ſo called, and haſt by ſad experience firſt or laſt found them all unfaithfull, and art almoſt ready to ſay of all men, that they are lyars, and that truth and reality are rarities; thou thinkeſt there is ſcarce a man upon the earth to be truſted? And wilt thou never be affraid of ſuch a friend? wilt thou at laſt be wiſe and be acquainted with a friend that never proved unfaithfull? behold, ſuch a one that would be glad with all his heart to entertain you, would you but forſake your old treacherous acquaintance. Here, here's one that never fails, nor forſakes thoſe that put their truſt in him. The Heavens ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed out of their places, but his faithfulneſs, his love ſhall never depart from his; and wilt thou not think ſuch a friend after all this worth the having? Come, come, never ſtand fretting thy heart out with diſcontents, men will be men, that is, unfaithful as long as the world laſts. Do you expect as long as ſin reigns in mens ſouls, that as long as Satan doth ſo much act therein, that they ſhould forget to be ſelfiſh, covetous, deceitful? but now God will alway be like himſelf a God, faithful, true, holy, juſt; and if

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any one in Heaven, or in Earth can condemn God juſtly, of the leaſt unfaithfulneſs, my mouth ſhall ſoon be ſtopped. In this thing I confeſs my ſelf to be of *Antoninus* his mind, who ſaid, *That if there be a God as there is moſt certainly, why that God muſt neceſſarily be moſt faithful, moſt wiſe, moſt good; but if there be no God, it is not worth the while to live in a world, in which there is nothing but ſin, confuſion, diſorder, and no hopes of a redreſs; the excellency of our being, our Reaſon, would make our miſery more exquiſite, and our lives leſs deſirable.* But bleſſed be God it is not come to that paſs, that we ſhould need queſtion the being of a God; for as one ſaith wiſely, *Thou haſt far more reaſon to queſtion thy own being then Gods.* Now I ſay again, methinks he that hath been ſo oft perplexed with many unfaithful, unworthy carriages from them which he called friends, ſhould be at laſt perſwaded to try what this one friend would do for him. O what abundance of ſorrow would it prevent, if men would but truſt God more, and men leſs. This, this is the friend ſick and well, rich and poor, living and dying, always the ſame. Make ſure of this Friend, and thou art ſafe; thy All is then in ſafe and faithful hands.

Seventhly, He is a rich Friend, *the earth is the Lords, and the Fulneſs thereof; cattel upon a thouſand hills is his.* He it is that hath the abſolute diſpoſal of Crowns and Scepters, he it is that can eaſily raiſe all his Favourites to a high eſtate; if the world and all its glory can do his any good, if Kingdoms and vaſt Dominions can advantage them, he can with better reaſon then he did to Chriſt, ſay, All this is mine, and if thou wilt love me and worſhip me, I will give you as much of it

it as will do thee good; and who would account it a kindneſs to be given that which will do one hurt? but theſe are but toys and trifles in compariſon of what God hath to beſtow upon his friends. Lift up thine eyes, and behold thoſe gliſtering Stars; look upon that ſtately Canopy that hangs over thy head; why, all this is nothing almoſt to the glory which ſhall be revealed; there is a far greater diſproportion between what we ſee and enjoy at the beſt here below, then there is between the footſtool and the Crown. O could you but by faith draw the curtain and ſee what is within; O did you but know what's behind thoſe hangings which you ſee wrought ſo curiouſly, the work of his fingers! O that, that's the place, there's a houſe indeed, there's a palace, couldſt thou but by faith and meditation take a view of it; could you but make a voyage into that far Country, and ſee that City of God, and diſcourſe with the inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem*; what diſcoveries ſhould you then have of the Riches, State, and Granduer of that Princes Court; ſhouldſt thou but ſee thoſe Treaſuries opened, and know the worth of Gods Jewels, thou wouldſt wonder what men and women meant, that they ſhould need ſo much perſwading to be acquainted with him that had ſuch things to beſtow; you would judge him worſe then mad, who ſhould not joyfully embrace any Overtures of this nature; in a word, they would reckon that perſon beſotted that ſhould not with all poſſible gratitude, cloſe with ſuch kind of propoſals. Come along therefore with me, poor ſoul, thou that art not worth a groat, and haſt never a friend that can or will give you any thing to ſpeak

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of, come along with me, and take a ſhort proſpect of the Territories of this mighty Monarch, let's get up to mount *Piſgah*, & make a ſurvey of that goodly land, let's take a turn or two in the Courts of his place, conſider well the pleaſantneſs of this ſeat, how rarely it is accommodated, the richneſs of the furniture, the nobleneſs of the inhabitants, the ſweetneſs of that harmony that ſounds night and day in that Temple, the unconceivable coſtlineſs, riches, glory, and excellency of every thing. Do but look a little about thee, are not thine eyes even dazelled at the ſight? do you ſee what building that is, whoſe walls are Jaſper, and the City is all of pure Gold, like unto clear glaſs, and the foundation of the walls of that City are garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones, *Rev.* 21 &c. And what think you now where is the Prince upon earth that ever was maſter of ſuch an eſtate? what are his attendants? the the meaneſt of thoſe that ſtand in his preſence, is no leſs then a King; the leaſt of his ſervants is more rich and glorious then the mightieſt Potentate that ever trod upon earthly mold, that was a ſtranger to God. This God doth not grudge to give that which is more worth then a thouſand Kingdoms to his Darlings. I might tell alſo at what a rate they live, who are fed always at his Table, and what dainty diſhes they feed upon, I might ſpeak of their Cloathing and Robes, all which ſpeak the riches of that Lord which maintains his ſervants ſo highly. But what am I doing. *Can I Graſp the heavens in my arms? or take up the Sea in the hollow of my hands? Can I meaſure the heaven of heavens, or weigh the mountains in ſcales, or the hills in a ballance?* Could I do all

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and a thouſand times more, yea could not give you an account of the Eſtate of him who would be your Friend, your husband: at the beſt, I can but give you a ſuperficial groſs relation of it, and when I have ſaid all that I can ſpeak of, and all the men in the world with all their tongues have ſpoke what they can too, nay, let Angels with their heavenly Rhetorick do what they can to ſet out the glory of his Kingdom; I ſay, when all this is done, you muſt remember all falls ſhort of what it is, and that ſince the beginning of the world men have not heard, neither can it enter into the heart of man, to conceive what a God is worth, what a friend you may have of him, if you will but ſpeedily be acquainted with him. His Kingdom hath no bounds, and his Dominions reach futher then both the *Indies*. The ſmall love-tokens that he ſends now and then to his Beloved into a far country, are of infinitely more value then all the Lockets of Diamonds and richeſt Pearls and Jewels in the world, *Pro.* 8. Behold how merrily *Rebeccah* looks upon a ſorry Jewel or two preſented by *Eliezer* from his Maſter, how ſoon is her heart conquered? and why ſhould we not be more taken with things of far greater worth? What, is all this, as much as nothing with you? Methinks your hearts ſhould be all in a fire: methinks, you ſhould quickly ſay, O that I could but ſee him! who will bring me acquainted with him, he ſhall have my heart, my deareſt love? Methinks, ſhould I ask you the ſame queſtion that they did *Rebeccah*, Wilt thou go a long with me to ſuch a friend? you ſhould readily, without any further diſpute ſay, yea, with all my heart, and think long to be up and going.

going. Why then do you talk of a year, a month longer? O what ail poor Creatures to make us ſtand waiting ſo long for an anſwer? Do you ever expect a better offer? Do you look to advance your ſelves ſomewhere elſe? Can you hope for a better, a richer match? Go thee and ſearch out among all thy Lovers which make ſuit to thee, which of them can feed thee with ſuch coſtly viands, which of them can cloath you in ſuch Royall Apparel? which of then can make you ſuch a Joynture? Conſider wiſely and ſpeedily, that I may turn to the right hand or the left. What, ſaith thou, canſt thou amongſt them all better thy ſelf? Is there any one like him? Is there any of the Sons of the mighty comparable to him? Are any of the Kings, or great ones of the Earth able to make you ſuch an offer, or ſhould they, can any of them make it good? What, have you yet reſolved upon the point or not? What it is you ſtand for, I pray do you queſtion the truth of what I ſpeak? Do you make account I ſpeak of the higheſt, and make the beſt of things? Why, then let me tell you further, I have not, I cannot tell you the half of what you will find to be true, if you would come to be throughly reſolved, or of what you will believe hereafter, to your ſorrow if you ſtill refuſe him. And I muſt further add to what I ſaid before, that whatever riches God poſſeſſes, he will joynture you in, as ſoon as you ſhall in good earneſt be willing to accept him for your Friend; all that I can ſpeak of, and more too, you may call your own. Ask, and it ſhall be given without preſcribing how much more then you can ask or think ſhall be given you. Your Lord and

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husband is not ſo niggardly as *Ahaſhuerus*, who ſaid, *What is thy requeſt, and what is thy petition, Queen Eſther, and it ſhall be given thee, to the half of my Kingdom?* But God ſaith what is thy requeſt, and what is thy petition poor Soul, and it ſhall be granted to the whole of my Kingdom; what is it thou wanteſt, what attendants doſt thou lack to wait upon thee to my Court? are they Prophets, Apoſtles, Miniſters, Angels, they ſhall be given, 1 *Cor* 3. 21. Do but try him; he bids you ask, and you ſhall have: Let me give you this one *memento*, Ask like one that hath to do with a rich King, who hates to do any thing below himſelf; remember it is he that delights to give like a God: widen therefore thy deſires as large as Heaven, be bold and ſpeak a great word, and I warrant thee thou ſhalt not be denied; tell God, that ſeeing in his infinite goodneſs and condeſcention, he hath been pleaſed to give thee leave to ask without reſtraint, thou doſt humbly requeſt his Son for thy Lord and Husband, himſelf for thy Father, God, and Friend, his Kingdom for thy Dowry, the Righteouſneſs of his Son for thy Ornament, Cloathing, and Beauty, the comforts of his Spirit, and abundance of his grace to bear thy charges handſomly, till thou comeſt to his houſe. This is high indeed! but thy great and noble Lord loves dearly to hear ſuch covetous Petitioners, who will be put off with nothing but ſuch great things. When do any of theſe go ſad from his Court? When do any of the ſeed of *Jacob* ſeek his face in vain? This, this is the generation of thriving ones, who ſeek for life, immortality and glory; who ſeek thy face, O God of *Jacob*. And now what do you ſay, will

will you believe all this? Dare you take my word? I am perſwaded none of you all think I dare tell you a lye, and do you any wrong; but for all that, I do not deſire you ſhould take my word, nor the word of any man living in a thing that concerns Eternity; but take his word who cannot lye, *Pſal.* 8. 18. *Riches and honour are with me; yea durable riches and righteouſneſs.* verſ. 19. *My fruit is better then gold; yea, then fine gold; and my revenue then choice ſilver.* The Wiſe man tells us, *That wealth makes many friends,* Prov. 19. 4. 6. *And that many will intreat the favour of the Prince; and that every one is a Friend to him that gives gifts.* If this might be in Spirituals, I ſhould not fear, but that I ſhould prevail with all my hearers to ſeek the friendſhip of God; if their real intereſt did weigh with them, if true riches and wealth could win their affections, if the moſt ſubſtantial good things might ſignifie any thing, if ſolid reaſons might byaſs them, I ſhould not fear going away without them. But, alas, alas, how little power have all theſe things with the ſenſual world? What are men and women turn'd to? What ſots & bruits are they in the concerns of their ſouls, & the affairs of that other world? Men run up & down hunting after good things, and have taken a falſe ſeat, they hope to catch that at laſt which they will feed upon, & ſatisfie themſelves with. I tell thee, O man, who askeſt, who will ſhew us any good? Here, here it is; riches thou meaneſt: well then, let it be ſo; & if I do not prove that what I offer thee from my great Maſter, to be a thouſand times more worth thy ſeeking then gold or ſilver, & better coin then that which bore *Ceſars* ſtamp

ſtamp upon it, then ſay you were cheated. Thou telleſt over thy moneys very faſt methinks, but are *you* ſure all that is Gold which doth ſo gliſter? Is all that currant Silver? Will it go in another Countrey? Is it not poſſible, but that you may be miſtaken. Here, here is the Gold that is tried, it will go any where; here is one that will give you, will you but deſire earneſtly his acquaintance, ſuch treaſure that will not periſh, ſuch ſilver that hath no tin, ſuch gold which hath no droſs, ſuch true riches that can't be taken away from you. Ask that Saint which looks ſo merrily, that lives ſo bravely, how he got his eſtate, and how he came to be ſo rich all of a ſudden; he will ſoon tell you how, and where his treaſure lies, and yet not fear being robbed. He hath of late been acquainted with a Friend that hath given him that which makes him eſteem himſelf more worth then if he were poſſeſſed of ten times more then ever *Alexander* or *Cæſars* was. A Friend of *Cyrus* in *Xenophon* being asked where his Treaſure was, which made him to think ſo highly of himſelf? his anſwer was, *Where* Cyrus *his Friend was.* A Chriſtian may with much better reaſon and chearfulneſs, if asked, where his Riches and Eſtate lies, anſwer, *Where God his Friend is.* Ask the pooreſt of them that are acquainted with God, the weakeſt of all his Children, what they will ſell their portion for, and what you ſhall give them for to reſign up all their intereſt in God, to quit their claim to this inheritance: Would they not all be of *Pauls* mind, and even ſcorn the motion, and count the glory of a thouſand worlds but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the

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monds: & to this a vaſt unmeaſurable tract of ground, land of inheritance, the moſt fertile ſoil in the world, bringing in ſuch a burden every year that ſhall trouble the owner to reap it; imagine his Paſture as great as his Arable, & all cloathed with thouſands of Cattel, ſmall and great, and none of them barren neither; ſuppoſe his Barns and Store-houſes could never be emptied, and his Preſſes ſhould burſt out every year with new Wine. Again, let the Merchant ſtore his Cellars with the moſt pure Oyl, and furniſh him with ſuch rich Spices as the Queen of Sheba *brought to* Solomon; *ſuppoſe he were provided with all the exquiſite Rarities that the Air, Sea, or Earth can afford, yet for all this he were a beggar, in compariſon of one that hath God for his Friend: Such a one poſſeſſeth him that poſſeſſeth all things.* Well then, be perſwaded at laſt to be wiſe. I remember the Moraliſt (*Sen. Epiſt. 6.*) brings in one acting like a wiſe man, and a good proficient in Philoſophy, who begins to be a friend to himſelf. And this is that that I am pleading with you for. If I came to rob you of all hopes of happineſs, and to give away all that you have or expect, and to turn Mendicant; if I came to perſwade you to eſpouſe a beggarly intereſt, and to match your ſelf ſo as that you ſhould be ſure to be undone, I ſhould not wonder, if after I had ſpoke much, I ſhould prevail but little. But when it is ſuch a Cauſe that I am pleading, when it is for your own unſpeakable advantage, when it is riches, true riches that I would have you look after, an eſtate that I would have you mind, which may be had for the looking after, have I not cauſe to admire what need a man ſhould have to uſe ſo many words? Had you money to ſpare, and could I tell you of a brave pur-

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chaſe that you might have an excellent penni-worth, I am perſwaded I ſhould not be very unwelcome. Could I tell you of a vaſt Eſtate that you might have, upon the matter, for accepting or looking after, I believe I need not ſpend ten years in earneſt begging and intreating you to look after ſuch a thing. Should I offer to bring you to the place and perſon of whom you might buy it, ſhould I not ſoon have your company? ſhould not your neceſſaries be quickly made ready for ſuch a journey? would you not be up betimes in the morning? nay, would you not travel all night, and think it no folly nor madneſs, both to loſe ſome reſt, and to take ſome pains, ſo you might but come to poſſeſs what I ſpeak of. Nay, were there but a poſſibility of obtaining of it, at leaſt a probability, I perſwade my ſelf you would not fail to look after it the very firſt thing you did. I am ready to think you would neither ſpare for pains or coſts, ſo that after all you might but make ſure of enjoying it. Why, what then is the matter that I can do no more in the buſineſs that I am about? I am ſure I bring you tidings of a better bargain, a braver purchaſe, and ſurer inheritance, and what need I then ſpend ſo much time in arguing with you? Good Lord what mean people? Are they out of their wits, and quite beſide themſelves? What, is a Feather better then a Crown, Braſs then Gold? Is a Glaſs to be preferred before a Diamond, finite Enjoyments before everlaſting Riches, Darkneſs before Light, the World before God? O how is man ſunk below himſelf? What hath ſin made men and women? If this be not folly and madneſs, what is? Such may go for wiſe men in the worlds

account that makes ſuch choices; and it's poſſible a man in *Bedlam* may ſay his neighbour that tore all his hair off from his head, is well in his wits. O that this were not the condition of the far greater part of the world. And what meaneſt thou, O my ſoul, that thou art no more affected to ſee ſuch vaſt multitudes of brain-ſick frantick ſinners, that make light of the tender of the Goſpel, that take them for their enemies, who would do their utmoſt to make them happy for ever. I muſt profeſs I am even aſhamed of my own heart, that I do not mingle my words with tears; that I ſhould ſpeak for God and ſouls, with ſo indifferent a ſpirit! Well, now you have heard of a great match by which you may be made for ever; are you for all this of the ſame mind you were: Well then, complain not if you be a beggar. Remember how you were offered, remember you might have been worth more then a world. O that inconſiderate ſouls did but know; and indeed know what an offer this is! O that they would not careleſly undervalue ſuch a propoſal! O what ſhall I do? How ſhall I perſwade you? What Arguments will prevail? O thou great and mighty God, give men and women but a ſpiritual underſtanding of theſe things, make them deeply apprehenſive of their excellency and reality, and then I ſhould ſoon have them with thankfulneſs complying with theſe tenders which thou commandeſt me to make unto them. O when ſhall it once be! How long ſhall the Devil and an unbelieving heart undo ſo many millions? How long ſhall Satan triumph over ſouls, and cheat them thus miſerably of their All? O pity, pity dear Lord, the

the beſotted fooliſh world, and give me more compaſſion to ſouls, that I may with incomparably greater earneſtneſs and tenderneſs plead thy cauſe with them, and reſolve to give them no reſt, till I have perſwaded ſome of them in good earneſt, to look after the great and weighty affairs of Eternity, and the making ſure of this Friend.

Eighthly, He is a ſympathizing Friend. It goes to his heart (with Reverence be it ſpoken) when any injuries are done to any of his; when his friends are wronged, it touches him to the quick: He is as tender of them, as of the apple of his eye. Again, *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* Never was tender-hearted Mother more pitiful over her only Child, then God is to them which love him; never was any friend ſo much concerned for another as God for his. What elſe mean thoſe high expreſſions of pity in *Iſa.* 63. 9. *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* It was not once or twice that God did ſo by them; but in all their afflictions, he was afflicted; which was not expreſſed in ſome cold formal words, ſuch as theſe. Alas poor creatures, they are quite undone, their enemies are very barbarous, but he ſhew'd it in that moſt real demonſtration, by ſaving of them by the Angel of his preſence. A verbal kindneſs coſts little, and helps little. But ſuppoſe his friends are carried Captive, are they not quite out of the reach of his help? No, his love, pity and power, will find them out in any place under Heaven; and if they be ſlaves, he will redeem them, though he gives

Kingdoms and Nations for their Ranſom. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and when by hard uſage they are grown ſo weak and feeble, that they can ſcarce go nor creep, why, he will carry them in his arms, and bare them. And thus he did of old; and his affections are rather greater then leſſer now, then they were then. The mother can be weary of carrying a dirty ſcreaming child; ſhe thinks it leſs trouble to whip him, or to let him lie till he hath cried himſelf weary; ſhe is loath to lug ſuch a troubleſome thing up and down all the day long. But yet ſuch is the tenderneſs of this Father, that he carries his all the day long, though they be ſo heavy, ſo unquiet, ſo dirty. But of that preſently. How oft do you read of ſtrange pity in the book of the *Judges*; when they had by their own folly more then once brought themſelves into calamity, how do his bowels yern over them; and when any of his are groaning under any trials or temptation, what ſending and running is there? how many Cordials are prepared for them? what calling to this ſervant and that ſervant to attend them with all the care that may be, and to comfort them in this ſtate? and in caſe of abuſe, how doth he ſhew his love to them? If you ſhould ask *Pharaoh*, he would tell you, that Gods Friends are edge tools: why elſe doth the Lord lay about him with ſo much indignation, when they are oppreſſed. Nay, for their ſakes he rebukes Kings, ſaying, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm*; if they do, be it on their peril. How did he bare the afflictions of his people *Iſrael* in *Egypt*? did he ſtand ſtill as if he were unconcerned? did he ſhut his eyes & not ſee? or did he ſtop

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his ears to their cries? No, no, he sees, he sees the sufferings of his in *Egypt*, and that both enemies and friends too shall know the one to their comfort, and the other to their cost, *Exod.* 3. 7. How doth he awaken for their help, and gird on his sword upon his thigh, and march out with fury? how doth he cloath himself with vengeance, as with a robe, and brandish his glittering sword, and sheath it in the hearts of his and their enemies? Wherefore is it that God hath so many controversies with *Edom*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*? Why doth he muster up his forces with violence against *Babylon*? Whose quarrel doth he engage in? What was the ground of that War? If you read over all the indictments that are before this great Judge, you will find this a common one, their hatred of his people; and this to be sure he will not put up. And that which puts an Accent upon all this, is the unworthy carriage of most of them towards him all this while. But of that under the next *Head*, which is this.

Ninthly, He is the most patient Friend: Never any one in the world could have digested such affronts, born such indignities, as God hath many a time, and even from the best of those that he takes into this intimacy with himself. Had it not been for this Covenant of Friendship, *Judah* and *Ephraim* too had been soon unpeopled; as for them they soon forgot their Covenant, yet for all that God remembers his; though *Ephraim* forget to be a Child, yet God can't forget to be a Father. Read that Text and wonder, *Hos.* 11. 7, 8. *And my people are bent to back-sliding: though they called them to the most high, yet none at all would exalt him.* Though they had many compassionate

Prophets that called after them day and night, when they ſaw them turning their backs upon God, yet they were not minded. Who now would conceive that God ſhould ever think a thought of kindneſs towards them more? yet hear what God ſaith, *How ſhall I give thee up, O* Ephraim? *how ſhall I deliver thee, O* Iſrael? *how ſhall I make thee as* Admah? *and how ſhall I ſet thee as* Zebulon? *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine anger. I will not return to deſtroy* Ephraim; *for I am God and not man; the holy One in the midſt of thee, and I will not enter into the City.* Well, now tell me if ever there were ſuch a compaſſionate, meek, patient Friend. *Ephraim* was up in open Arms againſt his maker, he did rebel moſt unworthily againſt his good Lord and Friend, to whom he was bound by infinite Engagements. *Ephraim* had quite caſt off God, and he will have nothing to do with him; and *Judah* is not far inferiour to his treacherous Brother; and what will God do? One would think, as I ſaid before, he ſhould eaſe himſelf quickly of ſuch falſe friends; one would think that after ſuch unfaithfulneſs, he ſhould for ever baniſh them his Court; one would ſoon conceive that he ſhould think of diſ-inheriting ſuch rebellious Children; for theirs was not the firſt, ſecond, nor third time that they had ſerved God thus; who then could imagine that he ſhould ever trouble himſelf with them any more? Should one not look every day when he ſhould quite caſt them off? Why, God ſeems ſometimes to threaten as much, and ſeems ever and anon to act towards them, as if he would never

never look upon them more while the world ſtands. Go ſaith God to your Idols, let them ſave you? what do you come to me; for you have refuſed to have me for your God; go cry to your gods, and let them deliver you. Thus he ſeems to turn away his face; yea, for all that, ſee how ſoon he forgets his diſpleaſure, *Ephraim* is his Child, his dear Child, and he can't but pitty him; and how ſhall I give thee up, O *Ephraim*, &c. how hardly is God brought ſo much as to chaſtiſe his Children; he never corrects them, but when there is an abſolute need of it; ask the Church under the rod, and ſhe can't but ſay as much, *Lam.* 3. 32, 33. *For though he cauſe grief, yet will he have compaſſion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of men.* He calls judgment his work, his ſtrange work: and when he doth correct his ſtubborn Children, how doth he many times give them a laſh and a kiſs, a frown, and a ſmile? O what would have become of the holieſt men living, if God ſhould upon every provocation have broke with them. If God ſhould mark iniquities, O who ſhould ſtand? Which of the fallen Sons of *Adam* hath not abuſed his high kindneſs? and yet for all that, how is his Patience and goodneſs exerciſed towards them; well might the Pſalmiſt make that the burden of one of his ſongs, *O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works towards the children of men*; & that of another, *For his mercy endureth for ever.* What created being could have born the thouſandth part of that from any hand that God doth every day from his deareſt children? What peeviſhneſs, and unfriendly quarrelling,

relling, what murmuring and repining, doth he bear, even from them for whom he hath done ſuch great things? How ſtrangely do they carry themſelves! how ſeldom and complemental in their viſits of him! how cold and formal in their addreſſes to him! how frequently are they converſing with his baſeſt enemies! How much treachery and underhand-dealing doth he find in them! yet for all this, how great are his kindneſſes, and how open are his arms, upon their acknowledgement, to receive them again! Little do we think what unkindneſs the Lord overlooks; and indeed except we knew what it was to be infinite in holineſs, could we any way conceive how infinite his Patience is, *Pſal.* 106 43, 44. *Many times did he deliver them: but they provoked him with their counſel, and were brought low for their iniquities. Nevertheleſs he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry, and he remembred for them his Covenant*, &c. Here, here's Patience, here's love and goodneſs with a witneſs! What Prince under Heaven would truſt a Rebel, that hath been in arms a hundred times againſt him, and that at the beſt doth ſerve him with ſo little delight? What friend would continue his familiarity and kindneſs there, where he hath found abundance of falſeneſs? and who but thou, O God, is ſo merciful and gratious, Long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth? As for the trouble that any of his meet with, moſt commonly they may thank themſelves for it; and it's always ſent them in kindneſs: there is none of them all but may ſay, this is my iniquity, this is the fruit of my back-ſliding, this I have got by my eſtrangment from God.

Tenthly,

Tenthly, He is an honourable friend, and to be acquainted with him is the higheſt honour in the world. This word, honour, ſounds great in the ears of this proud world; what running and catching to get a little of it! How do many undervalue their lives, and make nothing to hazard their blood for a little of that men call Honour; ſome prize it above riches and wealth, and care not almoſt at what rate they purchaſe it; and yet in the mean while they are furtheſt from that which they ſo greedily deſire, and they run away from that which they ſeem to purſue. Poor ignorant man is fearfully miſtaken, he calls that his honour which degrades him, and takes that for his glory which is his ſhame: How is he pleaſed with that which when he hath, he neither ſees nor feels, and ſcarce knows what it is! (*Epict.*) What is it, O man, that thou looſeſt thy ſleep for? what is it that thou art at ſo much charge to buy? that rather then you will want it, Eſtate, Blood, Life and Soul, and all muſt go for it? Knight, Lord, Earl, *&c.* Worſhipful, Right-worſhipful, Honourable, Excellent, Gracious, are big words, and make a great noiſe; but is this the true honour? will theſe words without the thing do a man ſo much good? a man, I ſaid, and ſo doth God ſay too, and death will make the biggeſt of them all know as much ere it be long; for all thoſe big words? what if his breath ſtinks that ſpeaks theſe words, and his that hears them, be not much ſweeter. (*Antoninus*) Is it ſuch an honour to have a company of fools to call him wiſe that it may be is like themſelves? is it worth a Soul to have it ſaid when I am in hell, there lived a brave Gentleman, that kept a Noble

Noble houſe, and brave Table, his Cellar was always open, one might come when one would, and drink as long as one could ſtand, and never hear, why do you ſo? and be always welcome; that is, in plain Engliſh, where a man might be incouraged to damn his Soul. There lived a Noble gallant Perſon who bid defiance to the Almighty, that had courage enough to go to hell merrily, and had a deſire to carry as many along with him as might be; damning, ſwearing, curſing was their Language, eating, drinking, ſleeping, whoring and perſecuting the people of God their buſineſs. And are theſe your honourable Perſons? Nay, Go higher, to buſtle up and down in Cloth of Gold with a vaſt retinue; to have men on this ſide, and that ſide, bowing and cringing; and is this ſuch a buſineſs? Is it worth the while to keep ſuch a ſtir about that which a wiſe man may want, and a fool have? (*Anton.*) Will thoſe Names, that Grandeur and ſtate, thoſe high Titles, render you more acceptable to God? will they procure you a freer acceſs into the preſence of that great King? will thoſe great words ſcare death? will he ſay when he comes to your houſe, this is a perſon of quality, I muſt not be ſo bold as to come near him? will your honour procure you a protection from the arreſts of this Serjeant? Where is the Honourable Perſonage, the Gentleman, Knight, Lord, King, or Monarch, that hath lived a thouſand years: (*Lucian*) Are the worms affraid to gnaw thy heart? Will thy fleſh never putrifie? Will your Servants, or your Maſter either honour you in Hell? And is this all that you keep ſo much a ſtir for, that can do you no good in the grave, or in another world? Can

that

that be better worth then Heaven, then God? O that we might but know what it is, that great thing is, which is preferred before Christ and everlasting glory? Again, I ask what is it that the Grandees of the world do so much idolize? Is it to be called Wise, Great, and Noble? But what if the wise God call such a one a fool? (*Epict.*) What if he know neither himself, nor his God, nor his interest? Hath he much greater reason to boast then a feather that some body will say it is heavy; or dung, that the Swine saith it is sweet. (*Juven.*) What profit is it for a man to be made great for betraying his Country, and flattering a Tyrant, who yesterday was the son of a Stage-Player, and to morrow shall be shorter by the head? What good will it do a beggar that is ready to be starved, to be told that he is a Prince, a brave fellow, worth some thousands by the year? But would you know which is the ready way to true honour? I tell you, it consists not in the favor of them that must die like themselves, and before that few years be over, must stand but upon even ground with the meanest; it consists not in the sorry acclamations of them which measure a mans worth by his estate, and their dependance upon him; it consists not in the praise of them whose commendations some wise men have counted a discredit. But he hath shewed thee, O man, what is truly honourable; to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, *Micah.* 6. 8. To bare relation to God as a Father, and to carry themselves as his Children, to be a Servant, and Friend of God, this, this is honourable, truly honourable, this is the heighth, the top of the Creatures preferment. To

converse

converſe with, and delight in his Maker. To love, admire, and rejoyce in God, and to love God, to take complacency in the ſoul; this is ſomething indeed, this is honour, a wiſe man would not grutch to venture his Eſtate, his Blood, his All for this. And how few of the Gallants of the world underſtand the nature of this honour? How do moſt of them account that which is the only true badge of Nobility, a term of diſgrace; and that which ſpeaks a perſon highly honourable, and to have brave blood running in his veins, to be low, ſordid, and much beneath them; as if it were below a Creature to ſerve his Maker, and a pitiful preferment to be advanced to glory. O that men of parts and learning, that perſons of Quality ſhould be ſo miſtaken! O what's become of their Reaſon? Is it an honour, a preferment for a man to become a brute? We are ready to pity mad men, and to laugh at fools; but whether there be not more reaſon to bemoan the condition of moſt of the honourable perſons in the world, I leave Chriſt and Chriſtians to judge. Well then, will you be informed after all this by him, who hath all preferments and honours in his gift, I mean the great King, and he will tell you that Glory and honour are in his preſence, 1 *Chron.* 16. 27. Mans onely honour and true dignity lies in his nearneſs, and acquaintance with God. A practical knowledge of his Maker is the Creatures greateſt preferment. *David* was of the mind, that it was none of the loweſt honours to be Gods ſervant, *Pſal.* 84. It is upon the account of *Iſraels* near Relation to God that *Moſes* reckons them the happieſt, the moſt honourable people

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in the world. Becauſe God had avouched them to be his peculiar people, therefore they might well be ſaid to be high above all the Nations which God had made, in praiſe, in name, and in honour, *Deut.* 26. 18 19. And upon this account, might a wiſe man have his choice, whether he will wear a Crown, and be a ſtranger to God, or rags, and be one of his neareſt ſervants; he will not ſtand long before he determine the caſe, he will ſoon anſwer with him, *That he had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of God, then dwell in tabernacles of wickedneſs.* If mens actions may ſpeak their Judgements, moſt of the Gallants of the world are of a far different opinion. But, O let me dwell for ever in his houſe, and ſtand always in his preſence; happy are they that ſee his face, happy are they that behold his beauty. This, this mans Crown, this is his higheſt honour and dignity, for God to be mindful of man, and for his Maker to viſit him; this ſets him but little below the Angels, this Crowns him with Glory and Honour, *Pſal.* 8. 45. This is that which puts a true perſonal worth upon any one; and therefore the *Pſalmiſt* thinks thoſe the excellent perſons, in whom is his delight. Upon this account the Scripture ſaith, *The righteous man, who is in covenant with God, is more excellent then his neighbour.* The pur-blind World, they judge altogether by the outward garb; they ſee the face, the rich apparel, they ſee the eſtate, but they ſee not that inward excellency and beauty that may be under but mean habit: they are ready to deſpiſe the Noble Worthies of the World, ſuch as can look upon Kingdoms as ſmall things in compariſon of what they have an intereſt in,

Who

who can call God Father, and Chriſt Brother. Have you never heard of a King in mean apparel, of a Prince without his Robes upon his back, or his Crown upon his head? and will you ſay that therefore he was but a common perſon? But thoſe heavenly Creatures that have a more ſpiritual refined ſenſe, that underſtands ſomething of things and Perſons, are quite of another mind, they can look upon great ones in the midſt of their gallantry, without a friend in Heaven, as mean perſons that have no intereſt to ſpeak of, and many of them, for all their greatneſs, to be in a far worſe condition then Dogs and Toads. They can alſo look upon a poor deſpiſed Saint, a contemned Chriſtian, though as to a carnal eye, he ſhould look as if he could ſcarce ſpeak ſenſe, to be a favourite of Heaven, a perſon of quality; ſuch a one as this he values as the Son of a King, a Citizen of *Zion*, one of the Royal Race, one of that glorious Retinue, that ſtand always in the preſence of God to ſerve him, the leaſt of which are Kings and Prieſts to their great Lord, *Rev.* 1. 6. *By faith he ſees their Crown, and looks upon that Royal Diadem, which ſhall ere long be put upon their princely heads.* Thus was the great preferment they ſought, this was the honour they moſt deſired; as for the world and all its glory, they can well ſpare it for thoſe that ſhall never be advanced to any higher dignity, to any better preferment. As for the Saint, as contemptible as he looks, he hath higher deſigns, nobler things, greater honours in his eye; and if that which the world ſo admires were the higheſt glory that a rational creature were capable of, the top of mans preferment, why then he could look upon brutes

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themſelves as his equals, except in this, that their pleaſures are more certain, and their miſeries leſs underſtood.

It is ſtoried of *Conſtantine* and *Valentinian* two Roman Emperours, that they ſubſcribed themſelves *Vaſſellos Chriſti*, the vaſſels of Chriſt; and that *Numa Pompilius* eſteemed it a higher honour to be a *Friend* of *God*, then a *Lord* of *Men*. Conſider poor ſinner, conſider what honours you ſlight, what preferments you refuſe, what dignity you undervalue, when you make light of acquaintance with God. Had that brave Stoick, *Epictetus* I mean, known God in Chriſt, he would much more have wondered at the inconſiderateneſs of them which make nothing of being related to God as a Father, he would much more have pitty'd them which cleave to their lower, meaner kindred, beaſt, who had rather be like Swine then God, and rather be companions to their ſervants then their Maker. Seems it to you but a light matter to be a Kings Son? is it but a ſmall matter, think you, to call God Father? is it nothing to be born to a Crown Immortal, that fadeth not away? This is honour, this is preferment worth the having, worth the looking after, worth the venturing ones life for. This is true Nobility to ſtand thus nearly related to him, before whom the Angels do vail their glorious Faces, and at whoſe feet the four and twenty Elders lay their Crowns. The Queen of *Sheba* thought *Solomons* Servants, happy, who ſtood always in his preſence, and heard this wiſdom; but what would ſhe have ſaid, had ſhe but known the Honour and Glory of his Prince! O bleſſed are thoſe that ſtand always in thy preſence

O God bleſſed are thy ſervants, bleſſed are thoſe which ſee thy Glory, and hear thy wiſdom; bleſſed are they that may have free acceſs to thee. O let me have this preferment, though I live like *Job* at his loweſt, and dye like *Lazarus*. Let others ſue for the favour of Princes, let them make the beſt of what the world can give, let them deſire that which hath been dangerous to more then *Haman*; I hope I ſhould never envy them, might I but have more frequent and intimate converſe with God, may I be but acquainted with him; O may I have but a heart more to admire, love, and delight in him, and ſerve him with the ſtrength and intenſenſs of my Soul while I am here, and ſtand for ever in his preſence, and behold his glorious Face with joy hereafter. O my Soul what meaneſt thou, that thou ſtill ſpeakeſt ſo faintly and coldly of ſuch infinitely glorious things? Why doth not a new life animate thee at the very mention of theſe things? Haſt thou not far more cauſe to raiſe up thy deſponding Spirits with chearfulneſs, then old *Jacob*, when his Son *Joſeph*, who was Lord of that Land, ſent for him into *Egypt*? Thy Father O my Soul, thy Brother is Lord, not of *Egypt*, nor of *Goſhen*, but of *Eden*, of *Zion*; he is the King of that glorious City, the new *Jeruſalem*; Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Foot-ſtool, and yet behold the waggons that he hath ſent for thee, behold the proviſion that he hath ſent to maintain thee comfortably in thy journey from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; is not this enough? O my Soul awake, up and ſee him before thou dyeſt; behold, he is coming, the Bridegroome is coming, *Joſeph* is coming, to meet thee with a gallant

Train

Train, in a glorious Equipage; It is but yet a little while, and thy husband will come and fetch thee in Royal State, attended with a numberleſs retinue of Saints and Angels. O hadſt thou but an eye to behold their Chariots and Horſmen coming upon the mountains; he is coming, he is coming, he will be here quickly, he will not tarry, he is at the door. Contemplate ſomtimes on theſe things, and a little antedate that Glory by Spiritual meditation, do but think what a brave ſight that will be to ſee the mountains covered with Chariots of fire, and Horſes of fire, when the heavens ſhall bow before thy friend, and the earth ſhall melt at his preſence, and yet thy heart not faint within thee; when the King ſhall come in the Clouds to fetch his Friends to his own houſe, where they ſhall dwell for ever. This honour have all the Saints.

Eleventhly, He is a ſuitable friend. It is ſuitableneſs that ſweetens Society. I can eaſily believe a poor Country Peaſant can take as much content in the company of a poor man like himſelf, as in the Society of a Prince, an unlearned Country man is no way fit to convers with Courtiers, and States-men; the vaſtneſs of the diſtance would ſo much ſwallow his mind, and the unſuitableneſs of his Spirit to ſuch company takes off that content which otherwiſe he might enjoy. But yet in Spirituals, though the diſtance between God and man beyond a poſſibility of our conception, and the diſproportion infinite; yet the Soul of man being immediately from God, and Spiritual like God, and having a Divine new Nature infuſed into it by the Spirit in

Regeneration, it finds an infinite ſuitableneſs, pleaſure and content in the injoyment of Gods preſence, and it is not ſunk, but raiſed by an Union, converſe and Society with it's maker. The truth of it is, did man but underſtand his own Original aright, he would think it infinitely below his noble Parentage to converſe with, and have intimate delightful Society with any but God and thoſe which bare the ſame relation to God with himſelf, or to bring poor ſtrangers acquainted with him as well as themſelves. There is not a match upon earth fit for the Soul of man to be matched to: but in that other Country there is a match indeed every way ſuitable; a Spirit for a Spirit, and everlaſting God for an everlaſting Soul; a precious Jeſus for a precious Soul, a holy God for thoſe which he hath made holy like himſelf, and that is none of the leaſt of mans happineſs, that notwithſtanding that infinite diſtance that is Naturally between him and his God, yet that God ſhould make in his Creature ſuch Noble Diſpoſitions, and ſuch Divine Qualifications, that there ſhould be the greateſt ſuitableneſs in the World between God and the Soul, and the Soul and God; and they both take wonderful content in the enjoyment of one another. This is in part here, but compleated in Glory. This we may find oft in Scripture expreſſed in the neareſt Relations, and deareſt Affections. Hence God is ſaid to be a Father, and they his Children; a Husband, and they his Spouſe. Now what greater ſuitableneſs can there be then between Father and Children, Husband and Wife? God is alſo ſaid to delight in them, and they in him; to rejoyce in their company, and they in his; and how

how could this be, except there was a ſuitableneſs in them one to another. Their wills are ſuited; what God wills they will; and what God loves, they love; and ſo what they love, as his Friends, God loves; one doth not thwart and contradict the other. O how ſweet then muſt the company, the communion of ſuch Friends be! O were our hearts as they ſhould be! were we more like God, we ſhould quickly experience the unſpeakable joy of our Souls, how ſuitable a Friend he is to a ſoul: we ſhould ſoon find, that as clay and ſtones are as unſuitable food for the body, ſo the world is unſuitable food for the ſoul to feed on, and that it is God alone that can fill and ſatisfie the vaſt deſires of it. O, I ſay again, were we but as we came out of our Makers hands, or rather were we trimmed up in our eldeſt brothers Robes, and brought into the immediate preſence of this great King, where we ſet before that glorious Throne, where the infinite brightneſs of his Majeſty ſhines ſo that the Angels themſelves do vail their faces before him; yet for all that we ſhould not long ſtand ſilent, as if the place and company were unſuitable to us, it would not be long before we ſhould carry it as thoſe that were nearly related, and had intimate acquaintance with him that ſits upon the throne. O the unſpeakable ſweetneſs that will be the enjoyment of his company! no tediouſneſs, no irkſomneſs at all upon our Spirits. We ſhall quickly underſtand our work, our priviledge. O infinite goodneſs! O boundleſs love! O let me be always ſolacing my ſoul in the contemplation of theſe things! O let the very thoughts of them be a Heaven upon earth to my ſoul! but

here, O here's the grief while we are here in a ſtrange Country, there is ſomthing (in all the poor fallen children of *Adam*, nay, in thoſe of them that are recovered, and by grace brought into a re-union with God) there is, I ſay, ſomething in God unſuitable to them, and in them unſuitable to God; and this, O this makes our lives ſo uncomfortable: but convers with God will wear off a great deal of that. When thou comeſt to lay off thy rages, and to put off thy old ſuit, and to put on that new one that is making for thee, I mean after death, when thou comeſt to glory, thou wilt find the caſe ſtrangly altered with thee. In Heaven there will be a perfect Harmony, Suitableneſs and Agreement between God and thee for ever; and thou wilt take infinite complacency and delight in him, and he in thee. And thus ſhalt thou ſpend Eternity in unconceivable joy, delight and pleaſures. This is Heaven, a perfect ſuitableneſs to God, and enjoying him for ever. O when, when, when ſhall it once be? *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Come O bleſſed Father by thy Spirit, and burn up what is unlike thee! O create a greater ſuitableneſs between my Soul and thee! O come thou down to me, or take me up to thee!* O could we but talk with one of thoſe happy Creatures that hath been in the very preſence of God in glory, and ſhould we ask him, whether he were not weary of the ſame work, of the ſame company, the ſame place; what anſwer, do you think he would make you? No more weary than a man upon the Rack, but juſt before would be of perfect eaſe, no more then a healthful hungry man is of eating; no more weary than the Sun is of running, than the

Fire

Fire of aſcending, or a Stone of falling towards the Center. *Sen. Epiſt.* 10. *I know not where I had rather be then with him. I was once upon Earth as you are now; and now I am in Heaven, and in neither of both theſe places can I find one that I can take more delight in then God.* I muſt ſay as he, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *Whom have I in Heaven but him? and there is none upon earth that I can deſire in compariſon of him.* I can't deſire a better employment then a delightful conſtant attending upon my God: Can I have better Company then ſuch a Father? Can a greater happineſs be conceived then Eternal Glory, a pleaſanter place then Heaven? That which I can ſpeak, you can't hear; and could you (though in this perfect glory) I can't expreſs what you will find and feel when you come hither. O had I but known ſo much as I do now, when I was in your condition upon earth, I ſhould with incomparable greater earneſtneſs have ſought after acquaintance with God then I did. *In his preſence is fulneſs of joy, at his right hand are pleaſures for evermore:* Now I feel, now I know it. I thought one ſmile ſweet upon earth, but now I ſee and feel infinitely more what you enjoy now, is a ſhadow, in compariſon of what you will enjoy hereafter. O what do you mean, that you prize his favour no more, that you get no more intimate acquaintance with him? What do you mean that you are ſo unwilling to come to this place of joy? O, were you but poſſeſt of what I ſpeak of, you would ſay what I ſay, you would never be weary of praiſing and ſerving him, you would never wiſh your ſelf out of his preſence, and think it not poſſible to be in more ſuitable ſociety. Is it ſo, O my ſoul, what then doeſt

thou here? Make haſt, O my ſoul, ſtay no longer here below, but know thy priviledge, underſtand where thy comforts are.

Twelfthly, He is a wiſe Friend. All the men and women in the world have great, mighty affairs to mannage; and they want Skil, Wiſdom and Diſcretion for the right mannagement of theſe things, they are wofully to ſeek as to their great buſineſs; they are wiſe to do evil, but in Spirituals; they become ſtupid, fottiſh fools, and as to the carrying on of their great work, they do it with the greateſt imprudence in the world: and they will moſt certainly for ever undo themſelves, except one that is wiſer then themſelves undertake to help them. All things go backward with them, and they labour in the very Fire whilſt they act without God, and it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe as long as there is ſuch a diſproportion between mans buſineſs, and his Spirit? Man is carnal, and his work is Spiritual. Would an ignorant poor Creature that is but one remove above a beaſt, be fit to mannage the great matters of Government? How ridiculouſly would he behave himſelf in a Chair of State! how ſtrangely would an unlearned man bungle, ſhould he go about to open one of the profound Demonſtrations of Mathematicks! But a natural man is far more unskilful then any of theſe, as to the carrying on of that great Imployment that he hath to look after, while he is on this ſide Eternity; his buſineſs is to ſerve his Maker, but what pittiful work doth he make of it? Man is made for an everlaſting State, he is ſent into this world to provide for another; a Good, a happineſs there is, which he is to look after;

after; he once had a fair eſtate, but he hath ſpent and loſt it all, and he is to ſee to the recovering of it again. He hath been in arms againſt his lawful Soveraign, and been guilty of the higheſt Treaſon, and thereby hath forfeited his Life, his Soul; now he hath his pardon to ſue out, and how doth he go to work in this one thing? to mention no more. Why he goes to beg a pardon arm'd Cap-a-pe, and with his Sword drawn, he comes to ask pardon for one Treaſon, and he is found acting of another. *Lord have mercy upon me, and give me leave to break thy laws*, is the ſum of all his prayer. He talks of Heaven, and yet makes all the haſt he can to Hell; he is told he is out of the way, but he laughs at him that tells him ſo; and that's his beſt; Sometimes he rages, and deſires with all ſpeed to remove him that would ſet him in the road to *Zion*; he calls for a Hatchet to cut down the bough upon which himſelf ſtands. And this is your man of Wiſdom. The man is under ſail in the midſt of Rocks and Sands; and if he would but look, he might ſee many doleful Spectacles, the tops of Maſts, ſhip-wacked ſouls I mean; and though the Pilots tell him of the danger, yet he ſays, he will never believe; but that's the beſt and the ſafeſt road to the harbour, and ſo on he goes as if he were ſure he could not miſcarry; and all this while he will not be perſwaded but that he acts every wiſely; he judgeth it one of his greateſt comforts, that he runs to miſery without any hinderance; and how can it otherwiſe be, except men were ſpiritually wiſe? and who can teach man this wiſdom? who ſhall inſtruct him? who ſhall help him, now his affairs are upon the mar-

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ter almoſt deſperate? why, if thou wilt but hear, here is one that will yet undertake their foul cauſe if you will be adviſed by him, for this he will ſet all at right. And O how doth he call after you! how willing to give you his advice! how deſirous to aſſiſt you, *Prov.* 1.20. &c. *Wiſdom cryeth without, ſhe uttereth her voyce in the ſtreets: She cryeth in the chief places of concourſe, in the openings of the Gates, ſhe uttereth her words, ſaying, How long, ye ſimple ones, will ye love ſimplicity? And ye ſcorners delight in ſcorning, and fools hate Knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.* And will you ſet at naught all his Counſels, and have none of his reproofs? Will you rather be ruined then beholding to him for advice. Let me put in one word, if this wiſe Counſellor be not for you, he will be againſt you, and if you find any that can order your ſad affairs more to your advantage, I pray make uſe of him; but if you will be ruled by him, you can't miſcarry, as ill a condition as you are in; though thou beeſt quite broke, yet he will give you ſuch a ſtock as that you may ſet up again, and ſuch directions as that you can't but thrive, if you will but follow them. It is he that teacheth his Spiritual Frugality, not to part with that for a trifle, which will be a rich commodity ere long; it is he who perſwades us to make the beſt uſe of every thing; it is he that teacheth Fools more true wiſdom then the great Politicians of the World; though the world judge them weak, yet they have wit enough to make a good bargain; to value Heaven before Hell, to flye from everlaſting burnings. They are wiſe enough to know what

what is for their real advantage, and what not. This is he that would bring thee acquainted with him. It is he who give his ſo much underſtanding, as to know the true worth of things, and the difference between good and evil; finite and infinite, time and eternity. Who is it that *David* goes to for counſel, when his politick Enemies combined againſt him? where doth he adviſe? who brings him out of all his intricacies? Is it not He that I am perſwading you to go to, who was never out-witted, who can eaſily turn the councel of *Achitophels* into fooliſhneſs; It is he who can infatuate the great Sages of the World, and make them weaker then children in their Counſels. And this is he who will be a conſtant Councellor to all thoſe that are his friends, his acquaintance. *Seneca, Epiſt.* 41. 81. gives excellent counſel indeed, which if we will preciſely follow, our matters can't but ſucceed. *Art thou never in any ſtraights? are all thy affaires carryed on with ſo much prudence, both as to time and eternity, that thou ſtandſt in no need of advice? Art thou ſure that this will always be thy condition? If not, why then wilt thou not be perſwaded to ſtrike in here?* Why if you will believe them, which to their comfort have tryed him again, & again, it is your unſpeakable intereſt and wiſdom to get God for your Friend, & then what ſoever you do, ſhall proſper by his advice; a poor Chriſtian can out-wit all the policy of Hell, and ſhew himſelf more wiſe than thoſe which call himſelf Fool, and count him mad, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *David* durſt truſt none elſe to guide him; but with his conduct he doth not fear but that he ſhall

ſhall come ſafe to his journeys end, *Thou ſhalt guide me by thy counſels, and bring me to thy glory.* And again he ſaith, by the help of this Counſellour he was wiſer than his teachers, *Pſal.* 119. 18. Here therefore what you had beſt to do as matters ſtand with you, *Prov.* 4. 11. *He will teach thee in the way of wiſdom: he will lead thee in the right paths. When thou goeſt, thy ſteps ſhall not be ſtraightned, and when thou runneſt, thou ſhalt not ſtumble, &c.* 1 Cor. 1. 15. *Becauſe the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men.* That which looks moſt contemptibly, if throughly underſtood, will be found to have more depth in it than the wiſeſt men of the world can reach. To chooſe ſuch a friend, this is wiſdom, this is prudence. The godly man knows that he hath a great cauſe to be decided ere long, and it will be no loſt labour to make the Judg his Friend. Well, what ſay you ſinners, is this conſiderable that I do now propound, or is it not? Can you plead your own cauſe, can you clear your title to glory without him? if not, be well adviſed before you ſlight ſuch a motion, as I now do make to you.

13. He is an immortal Friend. I, that's a Friend indeed. If one friend could be ſure to live juſt as long as the other; and were friends ſure never to want the advice, comfort, ſociety, and help one of another, it would not a little advance the worth of a friend. But where is ſuch a one to be found? What Hiſtories can give us an account of ſuch amities? Let perſons be united in never ſo cloſe an union, conjoyned in the faſteſt knot that nature can tie, yet death will firſt or laſt diſſolve it. So that ſometimes I have

have been almoſt of this mind, as to all worldly friends, conſidering them abſtract from God (for grace in any friend doth unſpeakably ſweeten the relation, and ſuch a relation will not dye) if we compare the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of poſſeſſing, and the bitterneſs in loſing, with the ſweetneſs of enjoying; that it's ſomwhat difficult to reſolve, whether ſuch ſhort-liv'd comforts are worth the looking after. Not but that I think a friend, a true friend, a great mercy, and much to be deſired; but really, if our affections be not for Gods ſake, if our love be not regulated by Religion, I can eaſily believe that the bitterneſs in loſing doth over-ballance the pleaſure in enjoying. And who would much trouble himſelf to get that with care, which muſt be poſſeſt with fears, & will be parted with with tears? All wordly enjoyments will ſerve us thus. When we expect moſt from them, and pleaſe our ſelves to think what content we enjoy in them, ten to one, if God love us, but that he either imbitters, or takes away that comfort from us. One ſaith, I had a dear Husband, ſuch a one as never woman had, but he is dead, I have loſt him. Another ſaith, I had a precious Child, a Brother, but he is gone. And every body, will be in this note firſt or laſt. And if the caſe be thus, who would be ſo fooliſh as to let out the ſtrength of his ſoul, upon that which he may ſoon be deprived of? But here, here's a friend, whom you need not fear over-loving or loſing a never dying friend, one that will be ſure to out-live you. (*Ar. Epict.* l. 3. c. 22.) *Say of what you will, that it is mortal, and you have diſgraced it enough; for how can*

that

that he of any great worth which can die, and when I have most need of it I may want; but this can't be said of God, he only is Immortal, and not subject to changes. As for the favour of Princes and great Ones, at the best, it is but an uncertainty; for it may be all thy hopes are bound up in this life, and that hour which puts an end to his dayes, puts a period to thy comfort? But it is another kind of friend that I would have you acquainted with. O why do Christians dote upon that which is so short liv'd? Make but choice of this friend, and you shall never say of him, he is dead, I have lost him. *Wherefore put not your trust in the Son of man, in whom there is no help; for his breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his earth. But happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his help, whose hope and love is fixed upon the Lord his God which made Heaven and earth, &c. That God who is called the Living God.* Psal. 146. 3,4,5,6.

4thly, He is a present friend, a friend that is alwayes in all places. Mans condition may possible be such, as that he may be deprived of the company of his deareſt worldly relations, he may be sequestred from the society of his most helpful and necessary friends! How oft have the dear children of God been clapt up in Dungeons, not only from the sight, but from the knowledge of their most affectionate acquaintance? It's no unusual thing for them to be banish'd from their native Country. Wives and Children, among Savage Men and beast; they have no man to make their complaints to, but such as will increase their sorrows. How frequently may they be in such a condition, as that they may not see, hear or speak to any friend? what

Bolts

Bolts and Bars, what Walls and Guards to keep them from them, which if they could not free them from, yet might in ſome meaſure alleviate their miſery? But now God is ſuch a friend, who cannot, who will not be kept out from his by Walls of Braſs, or bars of Iron, he will find out his friends in the darkeſt hole, and bare them company there in ſpite of all the powers of Hell. O how reviving are his viſits? What Cordials doth he bring along with him. This is that which makes the people of God ſo very chearful, when their enemies make account their condition is ſuch, as that it hath no mixture of joy or comfort in it. Was that a Priſon or Heaven where thoſe Martyrs were ſinging Hallelujahs? Was that a time to be ſo merry, when all the world diſowned them, when they were loaded with reproaches, and irons, and chains, counted the troublers of the nation, mad-men, hereticks? The caſe is clear: the ſight of this friend made them forget their Scorns, and think their chains Gold, and their priſon Liberty. It was God that ſpake it, and he hath been found to be as good as his word, *Iſa.* 43. 1,2. *Thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O* Jacob, *and that formed thee, O* Iſrael: *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine: When thou paſſeſt thorow the waters I will be with thee; and thorow the Rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt thorow the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* Who was that which bore the three children company in the fiery furnace? who was that which went into the Lions Den to viſit *Daniel*? who brought *Paul* alive to this

ſhore

ſhore when the ſhip in which he went was wrak't? Was it not this Friend, that I am now ſpeaking of? I might be large in reciting the miraculous preſervations which God hath vouchſafed to his, which is a manifeſt token of his preſence; when none can come near, beſides, he will not be far off. In the greateſt extremities, which none durſt own them, then God reckons it time for him to ſhew himſelf. It was not for nothing that the *Pſalmiſt* could ſpeak ſo chearfully when others were quaking, *Pſal.* 64. 12. &c. What was it that bore up his ſpirits, when there were ſuch dreadful Commotions? What refuge hath he to ſhelter himſelf under in time of ſuch Calamity? In what doth his ſtrength lie, that he is ſo confident? Whence doth he expect a ſupply, that he holds it out ſo bravely, when his enemies are ſo numerous, and his Friends ſo ſcarce? Why, *David* hath his inviſible Friends, as well as viſible enemies. Ask him, and he will tell you, That God is his refuge and ſtrength, and he is his confidence, and he will come in when he hath the greateſt need; he will be a very preſent help in trouble. And that is the reaſon that *David* will not fear, though the ſtorm were far greater then ever yet he was in, though the earth were removed, and the mountains were caſt into the midſt of the Sea; though the foundations of the earth were ſhaken, though the Sea ſhould roar and threaten the earth with another deluge, he can ſleep as ſecurely as a perſon little concerned; and this he can ſpeak, not only for himſelf, but for the whole city of God; God is in the midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved. The Saint

hath

hath a Friend that will bare him company in all places, in all dangers, and in his company he need not be afraid. Let the leaſt child that God hath, give but one cry, and he will ſoon awake. It can't but be ſo from the ſpirituality of his nature, the immenſity of his being, and the infiniteneſs of his love. It was Orthodox Divinity and Doctrine that *Ar. Epictetus l. 2. c. 14.* preached (though but a Heathen) when he ſaid, *That the firſt leſſon that became a wiſe man to learn, was, that there was a God, and then, that nothing in the world could be concealed from him, and that he knew not only our outward actions, but our moſt ſecret workings, our cloſeſt curtain buſineſſes; and not only ſo, but even our thoughts, projects and principles: which ſpeaks him every where, and conſequently ready at hand to help his Friends at a dead lift. Wherefore* (ſaith the ſame Author, *Idem. l. 3. c. 22.*) *think not that thou art alone when thou art in thy Chamber, in thy bed, when thy Curtains are drawn, when thou art lock'd up in a priſon never ſo dark under ground; if thou art good, thou ſhalt have two companions in ſpight of the malice of all thy enemies, a good Conſcience, and thy God.* This made that brave Moraliſt to dare his enemies to do their worſt to exclude his Friends from him. *Can* (ſaith he) *any man be baniſhed out of the world? whereſoever you ſend me, there will be the Sun, Moon, and Stars; but if not, God is there, I am ſure, with whom I may talk, to whom I may pray, he will bare me company, though all the reſt of my Friends be kept from me. And as long as you can't baniſh me from God, nor keep him from me, I ſhall reckon my ſelf at liberty; and ſhould I be ſent out of this world into another, even there I ſhould find my*

Friends, and he will ſcarce complain that is removed from a place where almoſt all are his enemies, to a place where quite all are his Friends. One would have thought theſe poor Heathens had been reading, *Pſal.* 139. Do you hear O Chriſtians, what language thoſe forementioned perſons ſpeak? and ſhall theſe that never had the thouſandth part of that advantage for the knowing of God, ſpeak and act thus, & ſhall Chriſtians have ſuch low thoughts of God? becauſe we do not ſee God, ſhall we therefore not believe that he is preſent every where? he that denies Gods own preſence, had upon the matter as good deny his being; for were it not ſo, how could he Judge the world with Juſtice? How could all things be ſuſtained by his power? God takes this as a very high indignity, that any ſhould in the leaſt queſtion this glorious attribute, *Jer.* 23,23,24. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God a far off? Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith the Lord.* And is not this a Friend worth the having, who will be ſure not to be abſent when you have need of him? the wicked indeed ſay, how doth God know, and can he ſee through the thick Clouds, and therefore they ſin with confidence, and oppreſs the Friends of God without any fear; they hope God doth not behold, they think omniſcience knows not. I wiſh there were not ſomething too like this ſometimes in the thoughts of Gods people too; but let me only leave that one Scripture with the firſt ſort, *Pſal.* 94.9, &c. *He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that teacheth men knowledge, ſhall not he know. The Lord*

knoweth

knoweth, &c. As for the desponding Christian that begins to think God is out of the reach of his Prayers, let me ask thee, O thou of little Faith, when did God ever absent himself from his in a time of need: When was he quite out of the hearing of their cry? I know indeed he may hide himself, yet then he is near them also, to try their love, and hear their voice, for God loves to hear his Children cry; (earthly Parents may correct their Children for crying, but God chastiseth his Children usually for their silence.) When he seems furthest off, he is but behind the Curtain, he is there where he with pleasure sees how earnestly his Children look up and down for him: and then when they are ready to sit down weeping, as if they had lost their Father; when they think they are quite forgot, and their enemies begin to triumph, and to ask, where now is your God? Then he lets both friends and foes know that he is near. And what say you to all this, you that as yet are strangers to God? Have you gotten such a friend as he is, that will always be at your elbow, that can and will come to help you (when other friends are far enough off,) whether man will or no? have you got such a friend? If not, why then will you not now accept of his acquaintance, who will be such a friend to all that love him? No good man is without the company of God, he walks with God, he talk with God, he eats with God, he drinks with God, and is entertained by him, and he sleeps in his Arms. God is with him in his Shop, in the Rode, at Home and Abroad, and who can miscarry that hath so helpful a companion always with him? When thy burdens are too heavy

do but complain, and he will either take them off thy back, or put under his own ſhoulders, and help thee to go away lighty with them; he will aſſiſt thee in ſix troubles, and in ſeven he will give thee help.

15. He is a Soul Friend, Soul Friends are the beſt friends. As ſoul affairs are the mightieſt affairs; ſo thoſe that give us the greateſt help in thoſe matters ought to be valued. God is the great Soul Friend; expect not to find him a friend to thy luſt, this ſcares the wicked from him, who would be glad to be acquainted with God, if he would gratifie their luſts, and pleaſe their wicked humors, and give them eternal happineſs after a life of wickedneſs; that is, would ungod himſelf for their ſakes. But hold there man; you ſhall ſooner ſee the Sun black, and have fire cold, and find a heaven in hell, then have God a friend to your Sin. God doth not promiſe to furniſh all his acquaintance with proviſion for their ſenſuality, he will not put a knife into thy hands to ſtab himſelf, or to cut thy own throat. There are too many of ſuch friends in the world, and men are generally ſo fooliſh as to count them friends, which deſerve another name; theſe are they which help men to Hell, and ſhew them the ſhorteſt cut to eternal miſery, and this muſt go for a ſpecial kindneſs. Sure men and woman will ſcarce be always of this mind. Muſt poiſon in a guilded cup go for a Cordial, and a kiſs, though with a dagger, be taken for true love, *Seneca* had more wit then to reckon ſuch among benefactors. He that can teach me the way to true happineſs, he that can help me to adorn, dreſs and trim my Soul; he by whoſe inſtructions

I ſhall be more in love with vertue, and out of love with ſin; he by whoſe directions I may be acquainted with my ſelf, and made truly to value that which is really moſt excellent, this ſhall be my friend, this ſhall be my companion. And where are ſuch friends to be found? How few of them in the world? Do not moſt, that go under that ſweet name of friends, do one another the greateſt unkindneſs that can be imagined! How do they incourage one another in an evil way, *Prov.* 1. *Pſal.* 2. How do men tug and pull to get one another apace into damnation; and if the wiſe world may be Judges, none muſt go for a friend, but he that would do me moſt miſchief; none muſt be counted an enemy, but he that deſires to do me the moſt real kindneſſes. This ſounds ſtrangely: yet for all that, did it lie in my way, I could eaſily prove it. Yet I muſt confidently affirm, that every ones experience, firſt or laſt will ſay as much. Something of this I have taken notice of, in my converſing with dying men. I remember once more particularly, being by a poor Creature that was juſt a going into another world, one of his old friends looked in to ſee him, at the ſight of which perſon he gnaſhed his teeth, and could not indure him in the room, but cry out, this was he that brought me to this, I may thank him, or I had not been in ſo ſad a condition upon a death-bed. But this by the by. Open enemies are better then ſuch friends. I ſay again, do not expect to have God ſuch a friend. God loves his too well to let them undo themſelves; he knows the worth of Souls; and pitties them that would part with their ſouls for a trifle, and therefore he tells men plainly, that

which

which may be really prejudicial to the health of their Souls; he can't but let them know what is food, and what is poiſon: what elſe is the meaning of thoſe vehement expoſtulations? Why doth he ſend ſo many meſſengers one after another? To what purpoſe elſe doth he tender ſuch promiſes, ſuch incouragement? Be it known therefore unto thee O man, if thou underſtand'ſt the worth of thy own Soul, and would'ſt have that Soul of thine to do well for ever, and would'ſt have a friend for thy Soul, that there is but one ſuch a friend to be found in the whole world, and that is God. O haſt thou no regard at all for thy precious and immortal Soul? Doſt thou never think of that excellent thing within thee? Doſt thou not care though thy Soul ſtarve, be naked and miſerable for ever? Is it nothing to thee, that thy Soul hath not ſo much as a ſhelter to hide it ſelf under, when a dreadful ſtorm ſhall riſe, and death ſhall turn it out of his old Tenement? Doſt thou not believe that it muſt have a being ſomewhere for ever, and that either in everlaſting glory or eternal burnings? and are theſe ſmall matters with you? What will you for all this take no care in the world about theſe grand affairs? Had a ſpecial friend committed but a Dog to thee to take care of, you would have thought your ſelf engaged in gratitude and honour, to have ſuited your care of him, to your reſpect to the perſon from whom you had him. (*Epict.*) *But doſt thou not know, O man, that thy God hath committed a Soul to thy care, & hath told thee what thou ſhalt do to preſerve the life and health of this thy ſoul, that it may be in good plight when he ſhall call for it. He doth tell thee what is its moſt natu-*

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val food, and what is not wholsome. He tells thee what thou shalt do to have that soul within thee everlastingly happy. And is all this of so little consequence, as to go in at one ear and out at the other? Are these things to be indifferent in? If mans soul were like the soul of a beast, the case were altered; if when his breath went out of his body there were an end of him, the matter were the less considerable; if he had ever a friend in another world, that could do as much for him as God can do, I should have little to say in this business. But since this is impossible, how can I bare to see thee neglect the making sure of such a friend? How can a Christian with any patience think, that those that he lives with, and dearly loves, should miss of such a friend, without whom their souls must be everlastingly miserable. If it were only for your bodies or estates I should scarce use so many words, neither I believe need I; but when it is for your souls and eternity, who can be silent? Once more consider what a friend thou mayst have; it is a friend for thy soul. Alas man, it is thy soul, thy precious soul that lies at stake; that Spirit within thee, which is more worth then a world; it is that which is in hazard, and here is a friend that offers thee to make that soul of thine happy for ever. Thy soul hath abundance of enemies: Some would debase it, others would rob thee of it, others would clap up a hasty match between that Noble Creature and a Servant, the World I mean: and there are very few that have any true kindness for it, and thou knowest not the worth of that Jewel, thy Soul; but here, here's a friend, if thou wilt but leave it with him, he will take care of it, it shall not be marred away for

nothing. Here's one will do that for its ſecurity, honour and happineſs, that all the world beſides can't do. If therefore thou haſt any love for thy poor ſoul, if thou ſetteſt any price upon that precious thing within thee; in a word, if thou wouldeſt have thy ſoul do well in another world, O ſtrike in here, cloſe with theſe tenders, liſten to the counſel of him who offers you the beſt advice in the world. He, he it is that now offers thee that thou canſt never value enough; he it is that will feed, cloath, and portion that Soul of thine, and after that marry thee to his oneiy Son; by which match you will be made for ever. O did men and women but know what a Soul is, did they imagine what a dreadful miſcarriage of a Soul is, did they but in any meaſure underſtand the things of their peace, could they but conceive what God could and would do for their Souls, I need to ſpend but little time in perſwading them to commit their Souls to him, to be acquainted with him, who will be ſure to take ſpecial care of their Souls, that they may do well, whatever is neglected. O could you but ſee, did you but know what a ſad taking they are in, that go into the other world with a poor naked Soul, and know no body in the world there, and have never a friend that doth take any notice of them, you would then think I ſpoke what I do with reaſon enough, and that my words were too ſhort, and my expoſtulations too faint in a matter of ſuch concernment. O ſinners, I tell you, nay, God tells you ſoul-matters are the greateſt matters in the world. I am ſure Chriſt thought ſo, or elſe he would not have been at ſo much coſt about them; thoſe that are in their wits and under-

underſtand themſelves, they know as much too, and ſo will you, ere a few years, it may be hours, be paſt. Thoſe that now make but a piſh of all this, when they have been but one quarter of an hour in another world, will ſay as I do, that a Soul-friend is the only Friend, and that Soul-concerns are the great concerns, things of weight and moment indeed; and that it would have quitted the coſt to have taken ſome pains to have look'd out for ſuch a one that could have ſtood the Soul in ſome ſtead in that other world; and that above all, it would have been no folly nor madneſs to have accepted of the kindneſs of one that deſired earneſtly to be acquainted with them, and to do their Soul a good turn. O that they had but been ſo conſiderate, as to have embraced ſuch a motion when it was offered! And this brings me to the next Qualification of this Friend.

16. He is a neceſſary Friend. There is an abſolute neceſſity of being acquainted with him. It's poſſible for a man that hath very few friends upon earth, to live as happily as he that hath many. Multitude of acquaintance, ſuch as they are, may contribute much to a mans care and ſorrow. And as for moſt friends, ſuch as are commonly ſo called, it is better to have their room than their company. A man may live without the acquaintance of Nobles, he may be as free, chearful, and rich without the knowledge of ſuch as them. One may live holily, and die joyfully, and may be happy for ever, though he never ſaw the face of a Prince, though he was never at Court, though he lived and died a ſtranger to all worldly friends. One may be diſown-

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ed by his Father, hatred by his Mother, ſlighted by all his Relation, and have never a friend under the Sun that will own him, and yet for all that be in a ſtate of truer felicity, then thoſe that are daily attended with troops of viſitors, whoſe gates are ſeldom ſhut, whoſe houſes are never empty: but amongſt all that comes, God never comes to them, as for his company they are ſtrangers to it; this man I may write miſerable for all his great and many friends. And him that hath the company of God in acquaintance with his Redeemer I'le call happy, though he have never a friend in the world beſides. Multitude of friends ſeldom add much to our comforts, but always to our cares. A man may go to Hell for all his great acquaintance with men; but it's impoſſible, if we are greatly acquainted with God, to miſs of Heaven. When men are unkind, if God be kind, it's well ballanced; but if God frown, whoſe ſmiles can comfort? I may be happy, though I am very little in mans favour; but it's impoſſible to be happy without Gods favour. To be a ſtranger to God, is to be a ſtranger to peace, joy, Heaven. O it's ſad being without God! If I ſhould declare the Judgement of moſt in the world, at leaſt if their practice may ſpeak for them, they ſee very little need of acquaintance with God. They do not write, *Muſt*, upon the things of Religion. They muſt eat, they muſt drink, they muſt ſleep, and if they want any of theſe things, they count themſelves in a ſad condition. But further, they muſt riot, they muſt be drunk, they muſt whore, they muſt have what their luſt calls for, let it be what it will, they muſt get into the favour of ſuch and ſuch a great

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perſon whoſe diſpleaſure they have incurred: Theſe are things that the world ſay muſt be; they are reckoned among the neceſſary things: but they do not ſay they muſt have a Chriſt, they muſt be reconciled to God, they muſt deny themſelves, they muſt ſeek firſt the Kingdom of Heaven; No, theſe are indifferent things amongſt them, theſe are things minded by the by, if not matter of ſcorn and jeſting, theſe the world think unneceſſary things. It's neceſſary their fleſh ſhould be pleaſed, it's neceſſary the Devil ſhould be obeyed, it's neceſſary they and theirs ſhould be ſomebody in the world, theſe are matters of weight, for theſe they think it worth the while to toil and moil, to ride early and late, and to loſe their ſleep, and think they can never do too much; and all this while they ſee no need at all of getting a friend for their ſouls, no need at all of knowing, loving and delighting in God. Well, ſeeing the caſe is thus, ſeeing it is no great matter whether you know God, or be known of him; be not then troubled at the day of Judgement, if God look upon you as a ſtranger then, be not grieved (ſeeing the knowledge of God is nothing with you) if God ſay he knows you not; if Gods preſence be no ſuch material thing, complain not then for the want of it; be content, if you can, to hear him ſay, *Depart I know you not.* O, but ſhall I thus leave you, poor ignorant ſinners? Conſider for the Lords ſake, for thy ſoul ſake, whether it be a neceſſary thing to avoid everlaſting burnings; is it a neceſſary thing to be ſaved? Is Eternal Glory and Heaven neceſſary? dare you ſay theſe are unneceſſary things? If theſe be neceſſary, then I am ſure

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God and Chriſt are neceſſary; *For this is Life Eternal to know God, and him whom he hath ſent, Jeſus Chriſt.* O how will the caſe be altered ere long, with the God-hating and Chriſt-deſpiſing world? when they ſhall be quite deſpoiled of all that which they prized above the knowledge of God, when all their friends ſhall appear to be enemies, when all their hopes ſhall be ſwept down like a Spiders web, O will they not then be of this mind, that it was no ſuch ſlight matter that I was ſo earneſt with them about, that acquaintance with God was no ſuch unneceſſary thing as they took it to be; and that there was more need of getting an intereſt in Chriſt, than of running to a Play-houſe, or a Whore-houſe. How will they rend the skies with their fruitleſs wiſhes? How will the Mountains eccho with their doleful lamentations? O that God would but know them! O that they might not hear that word, Depart! but ſeeing all that too little purpoſe, how then will they exclaim againſt themſelves? O that they ſhould be ſuch fools, that they ſhould be ſo madly beſotted, as to neglect the looking after acquaintance with God. Time was, that God would have had them to come to him; he called after them, and ſent for them again and again, but they would none of his company, they deſired not the knowledge of the moſt High; they ſaid to him, Depart from us: and now they have what they then deſired; now they ſee that the Miniſters had cauſe enough to ſay what they did, and a thouſand times more. As troubleſome as it was to hear of Hell, it's worſe to feel it. They ſee now *Muſt* is for the Soul, and not the Body. O

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that men and women would be now as ſerious in their judgments about theſe things as they will be ſhortly? Conſider, O man, that as little as thou mindeſt theſe things, theſe are the only things that are neceſſary. Thou *muſt* have a God for thy Friend, a Chriſt for thy Saviour to ſave thee from thy ſins, or elſe thou *Muſt* be damned, or elſe thou *Muſt* be curſed for ever. Thou mayſt lie racked upon thy bed of ſickneſs, where none can help thee; thou mayſt rot in a ſtinking dungeon, where no man can relieve thee; thou mayſt be roaſted in the flames, and yet for all this be a happy man. Worldly eaſe, pleaſure, health, riches, are none of thoſe abſolutely neceſſary things. A man may go to Hell and have them all, and a man may go to Heaven and want them. Thou mayſt have Eternal Reſt in another Life, though thou haſt ſcarce a day of eaſe in this. One may be a Favorite of God, though as miſerable as *Job*. But what will you ſay, of that man that hath not a God to go to? This, this is the miſerable man with a witneſs? O that ſeeing mens lives are ſo ſhort, they would wiſely husband their precious time in minding nothing but neceſſary things! O that unneceſſaries might be cut off. When I am about to undertake a buſineſs, let me ask my Soul this queſtion: O my ſoul, is this a buſineſs of abſolute neceſſity? haſt thou not ſomething of greater importance that is yet undone? We enter not into the Liſts for honour, where it is no great matter, whether we conquer, or no; we perſwade not men to buſie themſelves about toys, we are not ſo importunate about a thing of nothing. No Sirs, as unneceſſary as you think theſe things we ſpeak of

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are, ere long you will say as much as we do, and more too; you'l shortly find, that it was as much as your life and happiness was worth that lay at stake. These are things we must mind you of, or else we hazard our souls; and they are things that you must mind also, or else you hazard yours. I want significant words enough, to express the weight and importance of these things. O that what is wanting of that nature, might be supplied with tears, groans and compassions. I am through mercy ashamed of my own heart, (O that I were more so) that I should speak of such serious matters so slightly. It is not now a time to jest, O my soul, when thou art to discourse with miserable men and women, which refuse their happiness, and doat upon their misery. Thou art now about a work that concerns souls, and their eternal state. Tell me dear friends, do you in sober sadness believe that you have immortal souls? do you indeed know that your souls are naturally enemies to God, and that if you be not reconciled to God, that you must be dealt with as enemies? do you really believe all this? do you believe what a dreadfull thing it is to look such an enemy in the face when he shall sit in Judgement? Further, do you believe what it is to lie down in devouring flames, and to dwell with everlasting burnings? do you not think it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God; and if you do not, let me tell you, you are worse than mad; if you do believe all this, why, then let me ask you again, whether you conceive it unnecessary to use the utmost care and diligence to get acquainted with him: who can deliver you from

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the wrath to come? O friends, I call you ſo, and I believe moſt of you love me dearly! O that you would do me one kindneſs; I ſhould count it the greateſt kindneſs that you can do me, why, what is that you ſay! why, it is but to pity your own Souls, and to mind that one thing neceſſary, and to pitty them that are mourning for your dry eyes, and hard hearts? What ſay you to all this? if you have any thing to ſay againſt the neceſſity of theſe things, I am ready to plead the caſe with you, &c. Well, if it be not neceſſary to know God and Chriſt, and lay in proviſion for eternity, what then is neceſſary? If it be not neceſſary to ſerve, love, and delight in him, who can deliver from everlaſting death, and reward with everlaſting life, what then is? Once more, for your Souls ſakes conſider what you do, when you vigorouſly purſue worldly things, and look upon the favour, and diſpleaſure of God, as ſmall things! O write not theſe things down amongſt the ſuperfluous things which are to be minded by the by. Remember this, that it is very poſſible for a man to be exceeding holy, and yet to be altogether unknown to the world; but it is altogether impoſſible to be truly happy, and yet unacquainted with God.

17. He is a tryed Friend. Thouſands and Millions can from their own experience, ſay all this, which I have ſaid of him, and much more; but I ſhall paſs this over at preſent, having hinted it already, and becauſe it may be I may touch upon ſomething of the ſame Nature hereafter.

18. He is an everlaſting Friend. I ſhall be but brief in ſpeaking to this head, becauſe what might have been ſpoken of this, fell under that

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of his immorality. Yet becauſe it is poſſible to conceive God immortal in himſelf, and yet by reaſon of mans default, his kindneſs to him to be finite; ſo it was in reſpect of the Angels that fell from him. But now Bleſſed be free Grace, man ſtands upon ſurer ground then ever he did, the children of God have a firmer bottom by far then *Adam* had when he was in Paradice; his ſtate is more ſecure, being once united to God in Chriſt, then that of the Angels of Heaven in their firſt Creation. For that their State was mutable, is *de facto* proved; but now bleſſed be rich goodneſs, if we can but make ſure of reconciliation with God, again it is impoſſible for us to miſcarry. God hath ſworn, and he will perform it, that the heirs of glory might have the more ſtrong conſolation, *Iſa.* 54, 9, 10. *For this is as the waters of* Noah: *for I have ſworn that the waters of* Noah *ſhould no more go over the earth, ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Gods children need not fear diſ-inheriting; his gifts, and callings are without repentence. If God loved us while we were enemies, how much more being reconciled will he continue his love to us; once a Child of God, and a Child of God for ever; once in favour, and never out of it again, *Rom.* 8. 35, 39. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril or ſword. Nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Who can

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pluck us out of the Arms of the Almighty? Who, or what is that which can alienate our Fathers affections from us? If the promise of God, which saith, I will never, never, never, never, never leave nor forsake you, be valid, if his oath bind him, if the blood of Christ continue always to be satisfactory, if his mediation can prevail, if the nature of God be unchangeable, we are well enough, we are safe, if this be but clear that we are really reconciled to God, if we be acquainted with him. We are kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation. If they had been of us, saith the Apostle, no doubt they would have continued with us. It is possible indeed, yea, common for men to pretend love to God, and to seem to have a true friendship for him, and yet not to be truly so. To have a name to live, and to live, are two things. It is not unusual to bare God company (as I may say) abroad, and yet at home to have some body that they have a greater kindness for. It is common to go along with God (if I may so call it) in the external actions of Religion, and yet to desert him at last, *Isa.*58 1,2,3. *Mat.*7.21. There are many that seem to bid fair for Heaven, and if cap and knee will do, God shall have that; they will give him the husk and shell, that they may keep the kernel for one that they love better. Thousands there are of such persons in the world; and these profess abundance of kindness for God, they come oft to his house, and sit down there, and make as if they were his friends, and his acquaintance, and some of Gods servants, by a mistake, may bid them welcome, but yet for all this they may be strangers; only they have

heard of God, and can talk of him, and it may be have given him many tranſient viſits, but yet they want the real properties of friends: they never knew what it was to be brought nigh to the Father, by the Son; to have a ſence of their loſt ſtate and eſtrangement from God, and under a ſence of this, to make earneſt inquiry after him; they never knew what it was to converſe with God, to have an intimate acquaintance with him; to be ſending out the breathings of their Souls after him, and to be unſatisfied without him; they took up a trade of lifeleſs duties, and that was all. As for the life and power of Religion, they never underſtood it; communion with God, they heard oft of, but never underſtood what it meant, they never ſavoured, and reliſhed the things of God, nor with any ſuitableneſs or complacency ingaged in his ſervice: And as for thoſe more ſecret actings of Religion, to take up the intereſt of God, to deſign his glory, to be deeply concerned for his honour, obſerving their affections, and the workings of their hearts in duty; to take notice of anſwers of prayers, or to look after their petitions, when they are out of their mouths, they know not what theſe things are. So that from hence it appears, that God, and they, were never really acquainted; no wonder then that they do forſake God, and are forſaken of him. The building might look neatly, and the houſe ſeem to be ſtrong; but becauſe it was built upon the ſands, it need not ſeem ſtrange, if it fall when the winds riſe, and the waves beat againſt it: but I ſay it, and ſay it again, the houſe that is built upon a rock will not, cannot fall: If a man be really united to God in Chriſt, and

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the work of Grace throughly wrought upon him, it is impoſſible that God ſhould forſake ſuch a one. God can't but be true though man be falſe, he can't but value the ſatisfaction and interceſſion of his Son, he can't forget his own nature, *Iſa.*44.15,16. *Can a woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are continually before me, &c.* I do not ſay but that God may ſuſpend the refreſhing intimations of his love; nay, he may quite hide his face, and his deareſt ones may look upon themſelves as free among the dead, they may reckon themſelves ſuch as have no acquaintance with God, and yet for all this be exceeding dear to God; this is clear'd by every days experience. Nay, I may ſay, I believe that there are very few of them which know what Gods preſence, ſmiles, and love is, but know in ſome meaſure what it is to have his face hid, to walk in the dark, and ſee no light. It is no unuſual thing of a Child of God to queſtion his ſtate, to fear whether all that he ever did were not in hypocriſie and formality; have not the beſt been made ſometimes to queſtion (eſpecially upon ſome notable fall) whether, what they did formerly, did not proceed from meer common grace, or ſome leſs ſpiritual principle then the life of grace, and a divine nature within them. Were there ever any of the Sons of *Adam*, whom rich mercy hath plucked as Fire-brands out of the fire, to whom the Lord hath ſhewed his marvellous kindneſs, and love in Chriſt, that hath kept their watch ſo exactly, that have walked ſo cloſely with God, ſo as ne-

ver to have the leaſt frown from him? were their ever any that lived all their days under a conſtant lively ſence of their intereſt in divine everlaſting love? If there be, they have fared better then *Job* did, they enjoyed more then ever *Heman* or *David* did. A Child of God may oft be in a ſad ſtate, but yet he is always in a ſafe ſtate: the purpoſe of God ſtands firm. Though for a ſmall moment he ſeem to forſake them, yet with everlaſting mercies will he gather them? O Everlaſting! That's a ſweet word indeed in the Saints ear; he would not that one word ſhould have been out of the Bible, left out of the promiſe, for a world, *Iſa.* 54. If thou beeſt once truly acquainted with God, thy ſtate is as ſafe, thy condition as ſure as if thou wer't already in Heaven. God may and will chaſtiſe his with rods, but his loving kindneſs he will never remove from them, his mercy indures for ever. All that God gives to his friends and acquaintance; that is ſpiritual, is like himſelf, Everlaſting. God is not like ſhort-ſpirited man, every moment changing, one day doating upon an object, and the next day hating it as much. An earthly Prince may one moment ſet his Favourite at his Table, and the next command that he ſhould be hanged. But far be it from the unchangable God, that he ſhould do thus. As for the great ones of the world, it hath been counted by ſome, and thoſe none of the weakeſt, no ſmall piece of policy, to keep out of their knowledge: their favours are ſo dearly bought, their kindneſs ſo uncertain, their diſpleaſure ſo dangerous, and yet ſo eaſily procured. But here it is far otherwiſe. It is God, and God alone that is an everlaſting Friend, in whoſe preſence

ſence there is fulneſs of Joy, and Pleaſure for ever more. O theſe everlaſting things are great things! An everlaſting friend, an everlaſting inheritance, everlaſting glory, everlaſting joy, everlaſting life, and everlaſting death, they are matters of weight! O why ſhould not our very Souls be over-powred with the very thoughts of ſuch things! O this unbelief, this unbelief!

19. He is one that is willing and deſirous to be acquainted with you. What I have ſaid before had ſignified little to us, were it not for this. It's a miſery, and no comfort, to hear and know the great things which we muſt go without. But this is that which puts life into all thoſe powerful *Motives* which I handled before. God is the moſt loving, moſt ſtrong and rich Friend, and withall he hath in him a ſweet inclination to be acquainted with us. The tearms that he offers are the moſt reaſonable in the world. This, this is the comfort of the poor fallen Sons and Daughters of *Adam*; that though they have run away from God, though they have left their Fathers houſe, and turn'd Prodigals; yet their tender-hearted compaſſionate Father is ready to receive them again, his arms are open, he meets them; while they are yet a great way off, he runs to them and falls upon their neck and kiſſes them, and expreſſeth the greateſt kindneſs to them, and joy for their return. O unparalell'd love! O infinite goodneſs! God hath expreſſed this his willingneſs to receive poor loſt Sinners abundantly throughout all the Scripture. If God had not been willing to have been friends again with man, what needed he to have given himſelf the

trouble of parting with his deareſt Son, and ſending him into the world to manage this great work of reconciling man to himſelf? why elſe was that precious blood ſhed? and to what purpoſe ſhould he ſend ſo many Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, for ſo many hundreds of years, riſing up early, and ſitting up late? why are they commanded to cry aloud, to uſe ſo much earneſtneſs, to compel poor wandring ſtrangers to come to his houſe, but that he might be acquainted with them? Can any one conceive that he ſhould do all this without the leaſt deſign of kindneſs? If all that God hath done to the reconciling man to himſelf, doth not ſpeak his willingneſs to be reconciled to them, what can? *Iſa.* 5. 4. Nay, ſo willing is he to receive them, notwithſtanding all their backſlidings, that he teacheth them how they may addreſs themſelves to him moſt acceptably, he puts words in their mouths which they may uſe with good ſucceſs when they come before him, *Heſ.* 14. 1,2,4. Nay, that ſinners may be the more confirmed in their expectation of his favour, he hath moſt ſolemnly ſworn, *That he delights not in the death of ſinners, but had rather that they ſhould return and live.* Wherefore elſe is it that we are ſo ſtraightly commanded, as we will anſwer the neglect upon our peril before God at that terrible day, that we preach the Word in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon? To what purpoſe ſhould *Paul* expoſe himſelf to ſo many hazards both by Sea and Land? Why ſhould he teach this Doctrine of Reconciliation night and day with tears? Doth he not tell you that he did all this by Divine Diſpenſation, and that it was as much as his Soul was worth to

wave this work? And doth not all this speak his willingness to be friends again with man? Could not God have sent Legions of Angels with flaming swords in their hands, when he sent his Son and thousands of Prophets, Apostles, Ministers and Teachers? might he not have proclaimed war against them for ever, when he followed them with the Embassadors of peace? If he had had no thoughts of Agreement with them, could he not have spoken to them in thunder and lightning, with fire and brimstone, as well as in the still voyce of the Gospel? He could if he had pleased have made them to have known the breach of his Covenant, by giving them up to the will of their cruel enemies. God could as easily have cut off a whole world of us, as we can crush a moth, and easier too. But he is willing to shew forth the riches of his patience and goodness, that thereby sinners might be brought to Repentance. How doth God further express his willingness to receive returning sinners, by engaging them by many temporal favours? Who preserved that tender creature in the Womb, and brought it out of those dark Chambers into light? Who kept that helpless infant after it was in the world? Whose flax and wool do we wear upon our backs? To whom is it that we are beholding for every crumb we eat, and every drop we drink? Who spreads our table for us, and makes our cups to overflow? Who brought us from the brink of the grave, when we had received the sentence from our Doctor and our Disease? And what is the Language of all these mercies, *but return, O back-sliding Sinner, for in me is thy help found.* Love, de-

light in, and be acquainted with him, from whom thou haſt received ſo many kindneſſes. If thou wouldeſt accept of him for thy Lord, Husband, and Friend, who hath ſent thee theſe tokens; thou ſhalt have other favours then theſe be. Is not this the meaning of all the common mercies that we daily receive from him? Why? was not thy breath ſtopt with an Oath in thy mouth? Why is it that ſo many thouſands that were born ſince thy ſelf, are gone to their eternal ſtate, when thou art ſtill ſtanding? What haſt thou done to engage God more then others, that Worms ſhould not be feeding on thee, when thou art feeding upon the fat and ſweet? What is the *Engliſh* of all this? what are all theſe droves of mercies which God ſends to thee, but to cool thy enmity againſt him, and to make thee, who art marching out in thy warlike furniture, to meet him with tears of joy and friendly embraces? Is not, *Love the Giver*, written upon all his tokens? What means his frequent viſiting of thee, but deſire of acquaintance with thee? Had he had no deſire at all to know you, and to be known of you, do you think he would have call'd ſo oft and ſo kindly at your door, would he have ſtood knocking with ſo much patience, and have ſpoke to you ſo lovingly if he deſired ſtill to be a ſtranger to you? Is this like one that deſires your ruine? Did God never plead with thee by his Miniſters, and urge the ſame Argument that I do now? Did you never hear ſuch kind of expoſtulations as theſe? Why wilt thou go on to deſpiſe thy God, and to refuſe his love? what reaſon haſt thou to harbour ſuch hard thoughts of him? doth he deſerve ſuch un-

unkindneſs at your hands? How long ye ſimple ones will ye love ſimplicity? why will ye make light of that you can't poſſibly overvalue? the favour of God, and acquaintance with thy maker. How oft have you grieved his Spirit by your unworthy contempts? how many times have you given him cauſe to complain of your unhandſome uſage, when he in very pity and compaſſion came to viſit you: He hath reaſon to ſay now, as well as of old, *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, for I have nouriſhed and brought up Children, and they have Rebelled againſt me*, Iſa. 1. 2. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh people, and unwiſe? is not he thy Father that bought thee? hath he not made thee and eſtabliſhed thee?* Deut. 32. 6. *O that they were wiſe. And be inſtructed O Jeruſalem, leaſt my Soul depart from thee*, Jer. 6. 8. Is not this the voyce of mercy? have not theſe been Expoſtulations of the mighty God with his Rebellious Creatures? and yet how do they ſtand it out all this while, as if God were like to get ſo much by their acquaintance? Return, O fooliſh Sinner, if thou makeſt any thing of Salvation and Damnation, if thou valueſt everlaſting glory, if thou thinkeſt the commands, threatnings, and promiſes of the Almighty to be minded, come away and make no delay. O why wilt thou go on thus madly to undo thy ſelf? come away poor Soul, for all this it is not yet quite too late, thy glaſs is not yet quite run, thy Soul is not yet fully fixed in its unchangeable ſtate. Once more I make ſuch an offer to thee, as I am ſure none but a mad man will refuſe; ſuch an offer as none of the Kings and Lords of the world can make. The great and mighty Monarch of Heaven tenders thee an Alliance

with

with himſelf; he ſees how far thou art ſpent, how poor and low thou haſt brought thy ſelf by a dangerous and long war againſt thy maker; he foreſees what a condition thou wilt be in after a few more merry hours, except thou repent and turn. Wherefore in compaſſion to thy precious ſoul he hath commanded us to follow thee, and not to let thee be at quiet till thou haſt given us a promiſe, that thou wilt return and humble thy ſelf to thy God; and what, ſhall we ſtill loſe our labour! ſhall all this come to nothing! O prodigy of unkindneſs! O wonder of patience! thou haſt ſlighted the friendſhip of thy God, thou haſt ſet light by Chriſt, and undervalued Heaven and Eternity for ten, twenty, thirty years already, and yet the Lord ſend us once more in his name to ask you whether you are willing to have God for your Friend; God hath not yet ſaid, *Cut him down, bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into that lake that burns for ever. Bring thoſe mine enemies that would not that I ſhould reign over them, and ſlay them before my face.* God hath not yet ſpake that dreadful word, *Depart.* O what is it thou ſtayeſt for? What is it that makes this buſineſs to hang ſo long? What Lover is it that doth ſo long hold back thy heart? What is the matter that we can no more ſpeedily and effectually manage this great affair? What is it that thou doſt prefer before God? What is it that thou thinkeſt more worthy of thy warmeſt love then Chriſt? What is that great thing that thou ſtickeſt not to venture thy ſoul for? Act like a man that is rational and not beſide himſelf. If the World be God, if Earth be better then Chriſt, then chooſe that; if Chriſt be God, then chooſe him. How long

will

will you ſtand halting between two? love that which will laſt longeſt, be acquainted with him that is willing and able to do moſt for thee. Is the world worth more now then it was in *David's* time, when he preferred the favour of God before thouſands of Gold and Silver? Is the price of it raiſed? Can it bribe death, and ſtop the mouth of Divine Juſtice, and procure thee a real reſpect in another world? Go chaffer and ſee what bargain thou canſt make; tell God that thou wilt give him thouſands for thy brothers life, and as much more for the lengthning the leaſe of thy own to Eternity. What doth God ſay? is the bargain made? is it not enough? why, add a world to it, will that do? If it will not do this, if this purchaſe be too great for thy purſe, then go lower; can all thou haſt keep thee from fears, get thee a ſtomach, procure thee eaſe, rectifie thy conſtitution; will it do this, or will it not? if not, why ſhouldſt thou value that which can do ſo little for thee, before that which can do all things for thee? Be perſwaded at laſt to be wiſe. What is God like to get by your love, or loſe by your hatred? What have you to boaſt of? What excellencies to ſet you out? what portion to advance you, that you ſtand thus upon your tearms? Come, let's hear a little what it is thou thinkeſt ſo highly of thy ſelf for. I am ſure your over-great beauty can't commend you; for a Black-moor may with better reaſon brag of comlineſs, then ſuch a deformed loathſome creature can of beauty. I am ſure your helpfulneſs will not ſpeak for you; for thou art a crazy, decrepid, ſickly creature, that will coſt God more to cure thee, then thou art worth a thouſand

times

times. It can't be for thy Eſtate that thou art ſo much deſired, for all thy Gold is adulterate, thy Jewels counterfeit, thy All forfeited; and what is it then that thou haſt yet to boaſt of? come and ſet it before us, that we may acknowledge our miſtakes. Are the Cloaths upon thy back (as fine as thou art) thy own? is the Food that thou eateſt paid for? and is this the Creature that muſt be wooed with ſo much earneſtneſs? Behold all ye Inhabitants of the world, and admire! hear, O Heavens! this is that------(I want a name to call her by) which thinks it below her to be match't to Chriſt, and an undervaluing to be acquainted with her Maker, and a ſhame to have God for her Father! from the crown of the head to the ſole of the foot there is nothing but wounds and bruiſes, and putrified ſores; running plague-ſores that are broken, are her greateſt beauty: and here's a thing to be lov'd with all my heart! *Ezek.* 16. Whoſoever thou art that readeſt theſe lines, this was once thy condition, in theſe ornaments he found thee, when God came to ask thy heart, this was thy dreſs, though thou art thus highly advanced. And ſuch were ſome of you, but ye are waſhed, but ye are cleanſed.

And after all this, O Sinner, art thou ſtill as ſtout and proud as ever? Is Chriſt ſo willing to bring thee to his Father? is he willing to Cloath thee from head to foot with glorious Robes, ſuch a dreſs as may become thee in the preſence of a King? doth he offer to lead thee in his hands to his own Palace? is God ſo willing and deſirous to be your Father, and Chriſt to be your Husband? are all the Miniſters of Chriſt ſo willing to do their utmoſt to bring this match to protection? ſhall

ſhall they lie at you day and night to give your conſent, and to be willing; and are you ſtill unwilling? Well, if all this ſignifie little, and you miſs of Chriſt at laſt, and be not acquainted with God; after all, remember it was your own doings: and that you thought it greater wiſdom to marry the Servant then the Maſter, to obey the Rebel rather then your loving Prince. Remember you preferred Darkneſs before Light, Hell before Heaven. I call Heaven and Earth to Record this day, that I have ſet Life and Death before you, and you ſtand as if it were ſo difficult a matter to reſolve which were the beſt. This ſounds ſtrangely, and every one will be ready to write *Fool* upon that mans forehead that acts thus. Hold man, be not too ready to paſs thy cenſure before thou look within thee. Doſt thou ſee an abſolute need of Chriſt? Doſt thou adore his infinite love and kindneſs? Doſt thou give up thy ſelf to him for thy Lord, and receive him for better for worſe, come on it what will? Or doſt thou not rather ſpend thy thoughts, and let out thy affections upon the vanities and pleaſures of the world? Doſt thou not love Father and Mother, Wife and Children? Brethren and Siſters, Houſe and Lands more then him? Why, if this be thy caſe, I muſt ſay thou art one of the Fools that loves Death and hateſt Life, thou calleſt that folly in another, which in thy ſelf thou counteſt wiſdom. I wonder who it is that you ſtrive to pleaſe all this while! Is not the hand of *Joab* in all this? hath not Satan been deep in retarding this match? hath not he a deſign to marry thee to ſome painted Luſt, though he undoe thee for ever? and muſt he be pleaſed rather then God?

Is it more neceſſary to gratifie him that never yet intended to do any of the Sons of *Adam* any kindneſs, rather then thy beſt friends? Come away for ſhame, and let us loſe our breath no longer; and let that time we ſpend in pleading with you for God, be ſpent in ſinging with you, and praiſing God for you, and congratulating your happy acquaintance with God, and you, matching to his only Son.

20. But becauſe man is ſo wedded to the world, and dotes upon his luſt, that all the arguments that we can uſe, are moſt commonly unſucceſſeful, I ſhall add one more upon this ſort of motives drawn from the qualifications of him whom I would fain have you acquainted with, and that ſhall take in all that can be ſaid on this head, and that is this; Conſider that he is altogether lovely, he is made up of love, goodneſs, and all excellencies; and whatſoever pleaſure, delight and content you find in the Creature, it is tranſcendently in him, he is the chiefeſt of ten thouſands: ask of them that by Faith have ſeen him, inquire of the Spouſe in the *Canticles*, and ask her what is her beloved, more then another beloved? what there is in God and Chriſt more then in the world, and ſhe will almoſt wonder, that any one that is rational ſhould ask ſo fooliſh a queſtion; ſhe thinks you might with as much judgment and reaſon have ask'd, what there is in Heaven, more deſireable then in Hell? What is there is in eaſe more then in torments? in Gold and Jewels, more then in droſs; in a living, healthful, beautiful Creature, more then in a ſtinking rotten carcaſe? Did you but ſee his face, you would ſoon think there were ſomething in him

him more then in another; could you but ſee his eye, your heart would be in a flame: did you but underſtand what it is to be brought into his banquetting-houſe, you would ſay that they are neither fools nor mad men, that can find in their hearts to ſcorn the beauties and glories of this world in compariſon of one look or ſmile from God; and believe that his love was better then wine, to be preferred infinitely before the greateſt worldly pleaſures, and think that the Virgins had reaſon enough to love him, *Cant.* 1. 4. How high doth the Church run in his commendations? How doth ſhe endeavour to ſet him out to the life, that every one may admire his excellencies, and be taken with his beauties as well as her ſelf; neither doth ſhe fear to loſe him by this, nor indeed is unwilling that others ſhould fall in love with him as well as ſhe, *Cant.* 5. 9, 10. &c. She begins firſt with his face it is white and ruddy, the moſt exact beauty, ſo that ſhe muſt be blind that is not taken with him, and ſo ſhe goes on as well as ſhe can to ſet him out; but he is ſo infinitely above her commendations, that ſhe wants words to expreſs her ſelf, therefore ſhe ſpeaks one great one, *He is altogether lovely*; and if you will not believe, come and ſee. Do but look upon him by Faith and meditation, contemplate his beauties, and then if you have any thing yet to object, if after you have had a true ſight of him, and have well weighed all, you do not find that there is in him, infinitely more then I can tell you, why then let me bear the blame for ever.

Well, now let us gather up all theſe things together; and if a multitude of arguments, and if weight and reaſon, if vehemency and earneſtneſs

may

may prevail; I should have some good hopes that I should not want success in this work, nor you of the acquaintance with God, and everlasting glory. Therefore I say again, if kindness and love be taking, who so sweet and obliging as he? If comfort, joy and pleasure be desireable, who is there, when the Soul is surrounded with a multitude of perplexities that can so much delight, refresh and raise it? If Power, Glory and Majesty, if ability to defend from injuries, and revenge wrongs, might signifie any thing with poor flaitless Creatures; who is there that ever yet prevailed against him? Who ever contended with God and prospered? If vigour, activity and care in all the affairs of his friends, can intice the dull helpless sinner to receive him; who will take more care for, and do more for them then he? If his humility may engage us, if freedom of access, notwithstanding that infinite distance that is between us and him, signifie any thing as to the commending of him to our acquaintance; where can a poor beggar be more welcome then at the house of this mighty Prince? Can Faithfulness in the greatest streight raise the esteem of a friend? who ever yet trusted him that was deceived? Are riches and wealth taking? Who is there that can give a Kingdome for a portion, a love-token, and give everlasting glory, and Heaven for a joynture, but God? Doth pitty in misery, simpathy in suffering, compassion in distress, indear and commend a friend, who is more tender-hearted then he? Are Honours and preferments such great things? Who is that which will make all his favourites Kings and Priests, and set them upon Thrones, and reward, and commend

them

them before the whole World? is ſuitableneſs a conſiderable qualification to make up this match? who ſo ſuitable for the Soul, a Spirit, as God a Spirit? Who can ſatisfie it's vaſt and infinite deſires, but infinity it ſelf? Have poor ſimple Creatures that have quite undone themſelves by their folly and indiſcretion need of a wiſe Counſellor to wind them out of their ſad intricacies? who is there among the profound Polititians and grave Sages of the world to be compared unto him? Doth a dying man that hath a never-dying Soul, that is to paſs ſpeedily into an eternal ſtate, lack an ever-dying & immortal friend, that may ſtand him in ſome ſtead, when all his Kelations are dead and rotten? is not God immortal? Are not friends ſometimes furtheſt off from one, when one hath moſt need of them? Is not he then a friend highly to be prized, who can, who will never be abſent? Doth not God fill heaven and earth? What think you of a Soul-friend? Is not ſuch a one worth the looking after, who takes care that your Soul to be ſure ſhall not miſcarry? Who ever did more for Souls then Chriſt? Will it not be true prudence to make ſure of ſuch a friend as we muſt have for our friend, or we are miſerable for ever? and where is ſuch a one to be found, but he that hath the keys of heaven an hell? which is moſt conſiderable, Time, or Eternity? and whom ſhall I moſt value, him that promiſeth preſent pleaſures that are loſt as ſoon as felt, or him that will beſtow everlaſting favours? and are there not at Gods right hand pleaſures for evermore? If the trial and experience of ſo many millions may ſpeak his commendation, will not all that ever knew

God ſay, truly God is good to *Iſrael*. Will Gods willingneſs, deſire, and earneſtneſs prevail with you to come to him? What is the ſubſtance of the whole Bible? doth not almoſt every Chapter ſpeak the deſire that God hath to be reconciled to man? if the perfection of all excellencies meeting in one can render him amiable; how can he be ſlighted, who is altogether lovely; And what ſay you now, are you reſolved, or are you not? Shall the infinite Majeſty of Heaven condeſcend to offer himſelf to be loved and imbraced by ſinful duſt? ſhall God ſay, I will be thy Father? and ſhall not the ſinner ſay, I would be thy Child? Why ſhould not the heart of every Apoſtate rebellious Trayror, that hath forfeited Eſtate, Life and Soul, leap at ſuch good news, and ſay, will God for all this lay aſide the controverſy, and conclude a peace? Will he receive the rebell to mercy? will he open his doors to his prodigal? and is there yet any hope? Is it poſſible that ſuch ſins as mine ſhould be forgiven? Can it be conceived that ſuch a Creature as I ſhould be imbraced? what, look upon me, will God indeed take me into favour? Yes, thee, behold he calls thee, he offers thee his Son, a Kingdom, a Crown; behold the Father meets, he makes haſt to meet his returning prodigal; behold, the King hath ſent to invite thee to the feaſt: nay, he will give thee his only Son in marriage, the wedding garment is made ready, the Bridegroom is coming, the wheels of his Chariot run-apace, the friends of the Bridegroom are come to bid you make ready: up, deck your ſelf, put on your glorious Apparel, make haſt, make haſt ye Virgins, your companions are ready, all ſtay for you

you, the Bridegroom is at the door: Behold he is at the door, and will you ſtill let him knock? What! Father, Husband, a Kingdom? What words are theſe? Wilt thou O mighty *Jehovah* be my Father? Wilt thou O bleſſed *Jeſus* be my Husband? ſhall I have a Kingdom? What, me a Child, a Spouſe for the King of glory, an Heir of glory! Grace! Grace! *Amen, Hallelujah.* Be it to thy ſervants according to thy word! but who are we, and what is our fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought us hitherto? and now O Lord God, what ſhall thy ſervants ſay unto thee? for we are ſilenced with wonder, and muſt ſit down with aſtoniſhment, for we cannot utter the leaſt tittle of thy praiſes? What meaneth the highth of this ſtrange love? O that the God of heaven and earth ſhould condeſcend to enter into Covenant with his duſt, and to take into his boſom the viperous brood, that have often ſpit their venome in his face! We are not worthy to be as the handmaids, to waſh the feet of the ſervants of our Lord! How much leſs to be thy Sons and Heirs, and to be made partakers of all thoſe bleſſed Liberties and Priviledges which thou haſt ſetled upon us; but for thy goodneſs, ſake, and according to thy own heart, haſt thou done all theſe great things. *Even ſo Father, becauſe ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. Wherefore thou art great, O God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beſides thee, & what nation on earth is like thy people, whom God went to redeem for a people to himſelf, & to make him a name, & to do for them great things and terrible? for thou haſt confirmed them to thy ſelf, to be a people unto thee for ever, and thou Lord, art become their God. Wonder,*

O Heavens, and be moved, O Earth, at this great thing! For, behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himſelf ſhall be with them, and be their God. Be aſtoniſhed and raviſhed with wonder, for the infinite breach is made up, the offender is received, and God and man are reconciled, and a Covenant of peace entred, and Heaven and Earth are agreed upon the tearms, and have ſtruck their hands, and ſealed the Indentures. O happy concluſion! O bleſſed conjunction! Shall the Stars dwell with the duſt? Or the wide diſtant Poles be brought to mutual embraces and cohabitation? But here the diſtance of the tearms is infinitely greater, *Rejoyce O Angels! ſhout O Seraphims!* O all the friends of the Bridegroom and Bride, prepare an *Epithalamium*, be ready with the marriage Song. Lo, here is the wonder of wonders! for *Jehovah* hath betrothed himſelf for ever to his hopeleſs Captives, and owns the marriage before all the world, and is become one with us, & we with him; he hath bequeathed to us the precious things of the earth beneath, with the fulneſs thereof, and hath kept back nothing from us. And now, O Lord, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou haſt promiſed this goodneſs unto thy ſervants, and haſt left us nothing to ask at thy hands, but what thou haſt already freely granted. Only the word which thou haſt ſpoken concerning thy ſervants, eſtabliſh it for ever, and do as thou haſt ſaid, and let thy Name be magnified for ever, ſaying, *The Lord of Hoſt he is the God of Iſrael. Amen. Hallelujah.* And how do you like this muſick, O ye the loſt Sons and Daughters of *Adam*? how do you reliſh

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theſe Dainties? what do you think of this match? Some you ſee have been ſo wiſe, as with the greateſt gratitude they can for their ſouls, to cloſe with thoſe happy offers of grace. You hear how bravely ſuch and ſuch have beſtowed themſelves, and now they are made for ever. And what do you ſay to the ſame propoſals? have they ſo much reaſon to bleſs the day that ever ſuch a motion was made? have they cauſe to rejoyce for ever for thoſe bleſſed overtures, or are they all to be ſlighted by you? will Chriſt be worſe to you then them? is Heaven and happineſs leſs neceſſary for you then them? will the loſs of a Soul be more inconſiderable to you, then it would have been to them? Will not Heaven, Chriſt an Glory be as well worth your acceptance as theirs? What, are you willing to be ſhut out when the Bridegroom comes to fetch his Spouſe home: Can you bare it, to ſee ſuch, as you thought your inferiours, advanced, and your ſelf deſpiſed? What ſhall I ſay? what words ſhall I uſe? what ſhall I do to prevail? O that I could pity you a thouſand times more than I do! O that my eyes might weep in ſecret for thy folly! O that you alſo might do as ſome have done before you? though indeed they be but few that be ſo wiſe! O that you would alſo beſtow your heart upon Chriſt! give him your heart-love, or he will have your heart-bloody. Do not make your ſelf miſerable to pleaſe any living; do not ſlight Chriſt, becauſe muſt do ſo; go not with them to Hell for company. But that, if it be poſſible, I might perſwade you, I ſhall add ſome more motives, to prevail with you to get acquainted with God, which I am certain will either work that

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bleſſed effect, or riſe up againſt you to the aggravation of your confuſion, in that great and terrible day.

II. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of Motives which I ſhall inſiſt upon, for the inforcing of this Duty of acquainting your ſelves with God, I ſhall take from the glorious effect of this acquaintance with God.

1. The firſt effect of this acquaintance with God is, it makes the ſoul humble, and conſequently fits the ſoul for greater communications from God ſtill, and to do God the greater ſervice; but of that particular afterwards. Acquaintance with God, it makes the Soul humble. When God comes into the Soul, he brings ſuch a glorious light along with him, that he makes the Soul to ſee, not only his beauty, but its own deformity. *Pſal.* 119. 130. *The entrance of thy word giveth light: it giveth underſtanding to the ſimple.* Before the Soul was acquainted with the word of God, and by that had ſome diſcoveries of God made to it out of the Word, why it was in the dark, and ſaw nothing at all of its own vileneſs, it took no notice of that Sink, that Hell that was within it, conſider not its own Treaſon againſt the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and the dangerous hazzards that it did run every moment upon that account; but the Soul thought very well of its own ſtate, it flattered it ſelf in its own iniquity, the man thinks he is rich and increaſed in goods, and hath need of nothing; but when he comes to look into his Purſe, to open his

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Treaſury, and to tell over all his Gold and Silver in the light, why then he perceives a ſad miſtake: all his Silver is droſſie, and the beſt Riches that he hath is but dung: When the light comes in, he ſees the darkneſs of his Underſtanding, the perverſeneſs of his will, the diſorderlineſs of his Affections, the diſtemper of the whole ſoul. He before took himſelf for a beautiful creature, but by his light & this glaſs he ſees his beauty is great deformity, he beholds heaps of luſts crawling up and down, which before lay undiſcerned, and then that man that reckoned himſelf ſo happy, cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me? what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* I am undone, undone, how ſhall I live, where ſhall I dwell for ever? Time was, that the man admired what the Miniſters ailed to keep ſuch a ſtir about ſin, but now he wonders that they are no more earneſt in their preaching of it down. It was a little while ago, that he thought himſelf whole, but now he feels himſelf ſick to the very heart, wounded, fainting and ready to dye; he made full account that he was pure, but now he cries out unclean, unclean; it was not long ſince he ſaid with indignation, am I blind alſo? but now he cries out, and will not be ſilenced, have mercy upon me *Jeſus*, thou Son of *David*, and grant that I may receive my ſight. His language is much altered; he can now ſay, was ever ſuch a ſinner as I pardoned? Will ſuch a prodigal ever be received? ſhall ſuch foul offences as mine be forgiven? if God ſhould look upon me, and give me a Chriſt, and pitty me, and caſt his skirts over me, while I lye in my blood, if the Lord ſhould look upon me, it would be ſuch a wonder

that all that ever heard of it may juſtly admire. Now the man which thoughs himſelf the beſt of Saints, believes himſelf as bad as the worſt of ſinners! When a man begins to be acquainted with God, he begins alſo to know himſelf; He that ſaw no need of waſhing by Chriſt, would now have hands, feet, head and heart all waſht. He that thought himſelf ſometimes far enough from Hell, now begins to admire that he did not fall into it, and although there be a ſweet alteration in him for the better, and Saints begin to delight very much in him, yet he wonders that any one ſhould ſee any thing in him, that ſhould cauſe any affection in them towards him, much more to inflame their hearts in ſuch vehement love to him; if he hear of any reproaches that are caſt upon him, he is ready to ſay with that wiſe ſtoick (*Epiſt.*) *If he had known me better, he would have ſpoke much worſe of me. If any praiſe him, he judgeth that it proceeds from their ignorance of his weakneſs, rather then from any knowledge of his worth; and if he hear any ſuch language, he is ready to tremble for fear of his own heart, and cries out, not unto me, not unto me, but unto his name be the praiſe: yet not I, but Chriſt which dwelleth in me.* Thus it is with one that begins to have ſome ſaving knowledge of God, & the nearer he comes to God, the further he goes from himſelf, the more he ſees of him and his righteouſneſs, the leſs he ſees of his own; the more he is exalted, the more he debaſeth himſelf; like thoſe four and twenty Elders, he lays his Crown at the feet of God. Thus it was with *Job*, when God, as I may ſo ſay, ſtood at a greater diſtance from him, he is ready to ſpeak a little too highly, he ſtands much upon his

his own righteouſneſs, he ſtifly juſtifieth himſelf; but when the holy God comes a little nearer to him, when he throws off that dark cloud with which he had mantled himſelf, and when he cauſed that glorious brightneſs to break forth upon *Job*, and made him to ſee a glance of his Holineſs, Wiſdom and Juſtice, then how is he even aſhamed and confounded within himſelf, that he ſhould ever ſtand ſo much upon his ovvn juſtification, *Job* 42. 5,6. *I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye ſeeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.* When he comes to be better acquainted with God, how ſtrangely is his note changed; and I might ſay, when he was thus abaſed! how ſpeedily doth God raiſe him to a wonder. A man may hear of God twenty years together, and yet never abhor himſelf with duſt and aſhes, never ſee any vileneſs that is in his nature, never be brought off from his own righteouſneſs, never admire that he is kept out of hell! O but when he comes to ſee God, and to be acquainted with him, how doth he cry out of himſelf as unworthy to breath in the air, as deſerving nothing but wrath; then he hath not a word to ſay for the goodneſs of his own heart, now he can ſay with aſtoniſhement! O infinite patience! O unmeaſureable goodneſs! O the depths of Gods love! He muſt be merciful indeed that can pardon ſuch ſins! That muſt be goodneſs indeed that can be ſo to me! That is love with a witneſs, that can imbrace ſuch a loathſome monſter? What was it that made *Abraham* call himſelf duſt and aſhes? What made *David* to ſay he was a worm and no man? What made *Iſaiah* ſpeak ſo debaſingly of himſelf? why theſe were the friends

Friends of God, they had viſions of that holy One. When is it that the people of God are moſt ingenuous in their confeſſions? when do they moſt freely pour out their ſouls before God? When is it that they moſt readily open their ſoars and deſire that they ſhould be ſearched, but when this great Chyrurgion comes to their chamber? thoſe which before where whole, are now ſick, full of plague ſoars, head and heart ſick, dangerouſly ſick, and no whole part in them, they can ſay more againſt themſelves now, then ever the Miniſter could; they can aggravate their ſins, and lay loads upon themſelves; and they ſee themſelves vile, and even are ready to wonder that the earth did not open and ſwallow them up before this, they admire that God ſhould indure them ſo long, and think it no ſmall miracle that they were not cruſhed in the Egge, that they were not caſt from the darkneſs of the Womb, to the darkneſs of Hell. Now they can cry out of Original Sin, and the indiſpoſition of their ſouls to any thing that is good, and inclination to that which is bad: They ſay as well as *David, That they were born in ſin, and in iniquity did their mother conceive them*; they think every thing too good for them, all mercy on this ſide everlaſting miſery. They count every bit they eat, and every drop they drink more then they deſerve. They think themſelves unworthy of the leaſt of Gods mercies, *Gen.* 32. 10. Others ſay thankſgivings, but he feels them; others ſay confeſſions, but he feels them. It is one thing for a man to ſpeak of his own unworthineſs, and another thing to lie under the ſenſe of it. The heart and tongue are to diſtinct members. The heart

may

may ſpeak that which the tongue can't utter, and the tongue may utter that which the heart never felt. But a man that is brought into acquaintance with God, ſpeaks what he experiences, or rather his experience is greater then he ſpeaks, ſo that he doth not diſſemble with God, when he confeſſeth his ſin before him. They lay themſelves as low as Hell; this is humility, and this an effect of acquaintance with God. Hence it is that *Paul* ſaith of himſelf. *Eph.* 3. 8. *Unto me who am leſs then the leaſt of all Saints is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt; and to make all men ſee what is the fellowſhip, &c.* He wants words to expreſs Gods greatneſs, and his own ſmallneſs. Now, what was it that made *Paul* ſpeak and think thus of himſelf? There was a time when *Paul* would have ſpit in any ones face that ſhould have ſpoke as much againſt him, as he did againſt himſelf. What is it that hath wrought ſuch a ſtrange alteration in this great *Rabbi*, and made him ſo little? Why, this acquaintance with God, the ſight of Chriſt was the thing that laid this proud Phariſee in the duſt, and made him blind alſo. Mark this, always the more heavenly any man is, the more humble, See *Exod.* 3. 11. 2 *Sam.* 7. 18. If I ſhould appeal to the experiences of Saints, and ask them, when they had the loweſt thoughts of themſelves, would they not ſay, when they were neareſt God? Now, would you walk humbly, you muſt walk with your God; would you ſee more of your own deformity; why then you muſt labour to ſee more of his holineſs, more of his beauty. Contraries ſet neer one another, appear more viſibly.

2. Another excellent effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it will make a man fall upon ſin in good earneſt. When the ſoul ſees how infinitely good God is, it can't but ſee an unſpeakable evil in ſin, which is ſo directly contrary to him. When the ſoul hath really entred into a League with God, it preſently bids defiance to all his enemies; when he begins to be at peace with God, he preſently commenceth a war againſt his adverſaries. Friendſhip with God makes enmity againſt Satan. That which formerly the man rolled under his tongue as a ſweet morſel, is now like gall and wormwood to him. He that ſometimes did commit iniquity with greedineſs, can now ſay, that it is the greateſt folly and madneſs in the world; he knows that it is an evil and a bitter thing, as ſweet as it taſted when his pallate was diſtempered; he that gloried in his wickedneſs, now accounts it the greateſt ſhame in the world; and hates the garments which are beſpotted with the fleſh, which ſometimes he took for beautiful raiments. The burnt child dreads the fire; ſin hath coſt his friend dear, and him dear too. The child can't love that knife which ſtabb'd his Father. He knows how ſweet God is, and how much he hates ſin, and that if he would have Gods company, he muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to his deereſt beloved ſin; and therefore rather then he will offend ſo deare a friend, he will hew *Agag* in pieces before the Lord. He will as ſoon cut off one hand with the other, and be pull'd limb from limb, as again draw his ſword againſt his covenanted friend and again venture into the field in the cauſe that ſometimes he did ſo deeply engage body and ſoul in,

in. He that thought before that it was no great matter to Damn, Curſe, and Tear; but a trick of youth to Whore, and no harm to do what one had a mind to; to Eat and Drink, and Talk, and ſleep as one liſts, to give ones Luſt whatſoever it call'd for; he that could once make a mock of ſin, and Sleep ſecurely upon the top of a maſt, and thought it a piece of Gallantry to dare the Almighty, and was ready to laugh at them which durſt not be ſo Prodigal of their Souls, as himſelf; the caſe is now wonderfull altered with him, he now ſees the Harlot ſtript naked, he beholds how loathſome the whore is now her paint is waſhed of, ſin and hell are a like to him; tempt him to folly, and he will ſoon anſwer in *Joſephs* language, *How ſhall I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* He that ſometimes thought ſin the only pleaſure, and looked upon the Devil and the world as the only Friends, now ſees his dangerous miſtake, and bleſſeth God that his eyes are opened before he comes into another world; he knows now that holineſs is the only pleaſure, and God is the only Friend, and ſin, and the world are as mortal enemies as the Devil himſelf; he believes that if he venture upon ſin, he muſt venture upon the diſpleaſure of his Friend, whoſe favour he ſet more ſtore by than all the delights under Heaven, and whoſe loving kindneſs he judgeth to be better then life it ſelf. When the Soul is once acquainted with God, how ſtrangely are its apprehenſions of things altered? Now he calls Things and Perſons by their right Name; good he calls good, and evil evil, where as before he called evil good, and good

evil,

evil, and put light for darkneſs, and darkneſs for light; he now believes that the zealous compaſſionate Miniſters that ſpoke ſo much againſt ſin, had reaſon enough to have ſaid ten times as much as they did; he ſees that it was not for nothing that they were ſo earneſt with him; he hath taſted the Gall, Wormwood, and poiſon that is in, ſin; he plainly ſees what is the great Makebate between God and Man, he hath now the wit to underſtand what it is that hath kept good things ſo long from him: Tell him now of a Revel, a Whore, he had as live thou ſhouldſt perſwade him to part with his ſtrength and liberty and grind in a mill, he reckons you might as rationally deſire him to leap into a bottomleſs pit, to take up his everlaſting lodging in a Bed of flames, and to make light of Damnation. Let Men and Devils uſe what Arguments they will to prevail with him, now to cloſe with temptations, he is ſure he hath a ſtronger againſt them, he hath a ſenſible Argument within, which will anſwer all, if they had ten thouſand times as many more then they can produce: The love of Chriſt makes him abhor the motion; God is my Friend, daſhes all. Shall ſuch a one as I take up Arms againſt God? ſhall I that have found him ſo infinitely good? ſhall I that have experienced the Faithfulneſs of this friend to me, be ſo infinitely ungrateful as to be thus abominably unfaithful to him? Shall I that have forfeited my Life and Soul, and inſtead of Hell have received Heaven, inſtead of Damnation, Salvation; ſhall I inſtead of thankfulneſs again rebell? becauſe the Grace of God abounds, ſhall ſin abound? God forbid. To argue from mercy to ſin is the Devils

vils logick : To argue from mercy to duty is true Chriſtianity : One that is acquainted with God can expoſtulate the caſe with his own Soul, and ſay ! What meaneſt thou O my Soul to ſtand parlying with Satan ? haſt thou known what that hath coſt thee already ? look back to *Eden*. Who was it that diſpoſſeſſed thy GrandFather of that brave ſeat ? What did *Eve* get by diſcourſing with ſuch a Cheater ; have you not loſt enough already, but you muſt be venturing ſtill ? was it nothing for God of a friend to become a ſtranger and enemy ? was it a ſlight matter to be diveſted of all that glory that once thou didſt ſhine in, but that now again after thou art brought into ſome favour, thou muſt be tampering with that gameſter who had like to have robbed thee of all ? art thou talking of returning again to *Egypt* ? what, haſt thou ſo ſoon forgotten the Iron, and the Clay ? Is this all the thanks that you give the Lord for his unſpeakable mercy ? Doth he that hath done ſuch things for you deſerve no better at your hands ? Is this your kindneſs to your friend ? What was it O my ſoul, that that undone Creature ſaid unto thee ? Did he ſay, it is a little one, and thy Soul ſhall live ? what, did he ask a few merry hours that I ſhould ſpare my ſelf, that I ſhould not be righteous overmuch ? Did he ſo ? a ſpecial Friend ! I thank you for nothing ? and why didſt thou not anſwer the Tempter as *Solomon* did *Bathſheba* when ſhe ask'd a ſmall thing (as ſhe thought) for *Adonijah* ? and why doſt thou not ask the Kingdom alſo ? and why did not Satan ask thee to part with heaven, and thy intereſt in Chriſt, and thoſe favours ? as the Lord liveth, as ſmall a requeſt as thou thinkſt his was,

that

that word was ſpoken againſt thy life, thy Soul. *A vertuous man*, or as the Stoick calls him, *Anton.*) *One that hath God for his friend, when temptations are preſented, he remembers who he is, and how he ſtands related to God, and how little grateful ſuch an action would be to his Friend.* And thus he doth reſiſt the Temptation with a great deal of gallantry, when he remembers himſelf. Nay, ſometimes, Temptations to ſin do make Grace more to abound? the water which was intended to cool divine love, proves oyl, and makes that noble flame to burn more vehemently, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7. He deſires to exerciſe that Grace which is contrary to the vice which he is tempted to with more then ordinary vigour. He ſtands like a rock in the midſt of the Sea unſhaken; he is ſteadfaſt and unmovable, like a pillar in the Temple of his God. He is much of the ſame mind, in that point, with that brave Heathen, who ſpake thus to himſelf when Temptation was ſtrong. (*Ar. Epiſt.* l. 2. *c.* 18.) *Deliberate man, yield not raſhly, tis a great work that lies upon thy hands, tis a divine work, 'tis for a Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.* Now remember thy God, let's ſee what thy love to thy God is, remember his preſence, he beholds how thou ſtandeſt deliberating whether thou ſhouldeſt fight for him or againſt him, for ſhame ſhew not thy ſelf ſo baſely diſingenious: Remember what thy God, thy Friend did for thee at ſuch and ſuch a time: Remember how kindly you were entertained by him the laſt time you were at his houſe. Whoſe Sword is that you wear by your ſide? who gave you it? did not God give it you to fight againſt his enemies? and will you draw it againſt himſelf? Remember from whence you had all

that

that you do enjoy, and can you find in your heart to take Gods mercies, Gold, Silver, and Food, and bestow them all upon that which he hates? will you quarter & keep in pay with Gods coyn, his greatest enemy? And if you feel your heart still staggering, and scarce able to keep it's ground, then remember God stands by, Christ looks on, and sees how gallantly any Champion of his will demean themselves on his quarrel; & that there is not a more lovely sight upon the Earth, then to behold one of his Friends, rather venturing their lives then they will bare that the least indignity or affront should be put upon their God! O happy are they that can always act as in the sight of God! and if the Soul can have but a constant fresh sence of it's relation to God, and his eye, it is impossible but that it should hate sin, which is so directly opposite to him: happy are those who by the thoughts of God are inraged against sin! Is it not enough saith that heavenly Soul that is acquainted with God, that I have done such and such things against God, when I knew him not, but that I should again ingage against him after I have been obliged by a thousand mercies, after I have tasted and seen how good the Lord is? is it a light matter that I did so long fight against him then? and shall I now renew my rebellions, when I have had so much experience of the folly & madness of such a war, where I shall be as surely conquered as I draw my sword? and hath God kept me by a miracle of mercy out of Hell, and after I had run out so wretchedly, and undon my self, set me up again, after I had plaid the prodigal, received me again into favour, and shall I after all deal thus

basely by him: No, I'le die a thousand deaths before I will willingly yield to any thing that may be in the least offensive to him, whom my Soul hath such an infinite reason to love above the whole world. The knowledg of Gods service, and Satans too, makes a Soul to distinguish; he that knows what it is to be made free by Christ abhors his old Master, he remembers full well the great hardship that he then underwent, when he had nothing to live upon but Husks, he calls to mind the Clay and Morter, he can't forget the cruel vassalage that he served under; Garlick and Onions were his dainties, and truly he can't desire to leave his Manna for such kind of Food; he is not in love with the Whip and Scourge, he doth not dote upon the fetters, the Iron which went into his Soul, but he is glad with all his heart to be free from those Task-masters, which made him to serve with rigour, he hath no mind to return to his old Work: My meaning in all this is, he that was a servant and a drudg of Satans, and a slave to his lust, when he once comes to taste the sweetness of Spiritual liberty, to be made free by Christ, he hath no desire again to be inslaved, but doth with the greatest detestation, reject all the propolals and promises that the Devil makes, to bring this business about; he knows Satan too well to love his service, he remembers that all his pay was promises and no more, he remembers that he fed him with poyson, and made him do that which had like to break his bones, and undone him for ever; he sees what Satans designs were, and what had become of him quickly, if he had gone on in his service; he believes chains to be chains, though they

they be of Gold, believes that poyſon will kill him, though it may be ſweet in the mouth; he hath now ſuch a ſence of the evil and baſeneſs of ſin, as being ſo infinitely loathſome to God, as that he hates it with a perfect hatred; he hath a will in ſome meaſure conformed to the will of God; and what his friend, the Lord loves, he can't hate, and where his God hates he can't love. *Pſal.* 139. 22. *Do not I hate them O Lord which hate thee? and am I not grieved with them which riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* Now what is it that fires the Pſalmists choller ſo much? Why, he had been working upon his own heart, in the former part of the Pſalm, the doctrine of Gods omniſciency and goodneſs, and by meditation upon this ſubject he was brought under a lively ſence of the greatneſs of Divine kindneſs; and while his heart did thus muſe, the fire burnt, his ſoul was in a flame againſt ſin, *verſe* 17. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me O God!* O when the ſoul hath ſweet thoughts of God, it will have ſower thoughts of ſin. When the ſoul loves God dearly, it can't chuſe but hate ſin entirely. None behold ſuch deformity in ſin, as thoſe which behold moſt beauty in God. Hence it is that ſome of the people of God have (nay all of them which are really acquainted with God, are of the ſame mind) counted it more deſirable to leap into the flames, then to venture upon a known ſin. It was no untruth in the abſolute poſition, though falſly applyed by *Job*'s friend, that it is a great wickedneſs to chooſe the leaſt ſin before the greateſt ſuffering, *Job* 36. 21. What was it that made *Paul* ſo weary of himſelf?

what burden was it that made his back ſo ake? what pains cauſed thoſe bitter groans? *Rom.* 7. was it not ſin? and why did not *Paul* groan before as well as then? was it becauſe he then had no ſin at all, or leſs ſin then when he made that bitter complaint? no ſuch matter, but becauſe he had then leſs acquaintance with God. But now he is become acquainted with God, the more he doth abhor himſelf for ſin. He now knows better then he did, his eyes are opened, and he ſees ſin in its colours, and he looks upon it as ſo great an evil, that he doth want words to expreſs the odious nature of it; therefore becauſe he can't find a worſe word, he calls ſin by its own name, *Sinful Sin*; which he thought a more ſignificant Epithite, then if he had called it *Deviliſh Sin*. What makes the children of God to be ſo weary of this world, and ſo deſirous to be upon the wing? why it is becauſe of better acquaintance elſe where; they know that then they ſhall put off that carrion that now they carry about with them; Sin I mean, which like a dead carcaſe bound to a living, doth now ſtink ſo abominably in their noſtrils; they know that then they ſhall have a ſweeter ſmell, and themſelves alſo ſmell more ſavoury in the noſtrils of God. They know that poverty ſhall be ſwallowed up with riches, want with fulneſs, ſin with holineſs, miſery with happineſs, they have an inheritance, a City, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs, and nothing that is unclean ſhall enter into it; and when they come thither, they know the caſe will be altered with them, and that though now they bare about with them a body of death and ſin, yet then they ſhall have a body as pure, as bright and

and glorious as the Sun, they ſhall be preſented by Chriſt to the Father without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing. He knows that as long as he is thus ſullied by his ſin, his great friend will not take ſo much pleaſure in his company. *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, the Ark and *Dagon*, God and Sin can't dwell in the ſame heart; therefore he deſires to have leſs of ſins company, that he may have more of Gods; none of ſins company, that he may have always Gods company. Obſerve that conſtantly in your own experience and others, thoſe which walk moſt cloſe with God are moſt tender, as to the matter of ſin; and thoſe which are leſs in converſe with God, are more bold in their venturing upon ſin, and after it is committed they have leſs regret. What is the reaſon that one can ſwallow any thing almoſt, and another is afraid of the leaſt appearance of evil; he hates the garment ſpotted with the fleſh, he is as fearful of cloathing himſelf with wickedneſs, as of putting on the garments of one that hath had the Leproſie or Plague upon him; he hates vain thoughts, becauſe he loves God and his laws, *Pſ* 119. 104. 113.

3. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, that it makes one to have very low and undervaluing thoughts of the world. When the Saint hath been with *Paul* raiſed up to the third Heaven, when he hath had ſome intimate converſe with God, he can look the world into almoſt nothing; nay, if it ſtand in competition with Chriſt, he counts it but as dung and droſs in compariſon of the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus his Lord, *Phil.* 3. 8. he can then ſet a higher value upon the light of Gods coun-

tenance, than upon Corn, and Wine, and Oyl. It is becauſe that poor Creatures know no better, that they dote ſo much upon the world; did they but know what it is to have one look of love from God, were they but acquainted with the glory of another world, they would ſoon diſreliſh every thing elſe; nothing will down with them which have been feaſted in Gods Houſe, but thoſe royal dainties. Taſte the world who will, ſaith the Saint, give me but more Grace, more of Chriſts company, let me but maintain an intimate familiarity with God, let me be but better acquainted with him, and be more frequently refreſhed with the ſmiles, this is all that I deſire upon earth, this is all that I expect to make my happineſs compleat in Heaven. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth that I can deſire in compariſon of thee.* It was not without good reaſon that the *Pſalmiſt* prizes the Commands of God above Gold and Silver; it was no miſtake in *Solomon* to count Wiſdom more excellent than the fineſt Gold, and more precious than Rubies. That ſpiritual Merchant knew what he did when he ſold all that he had for that Pearl of great price; he was ſure he ſhould be no loſer by ſuch a bargain. Bring me a heavenly Creature that hath had a view by Faith, of the Glory of Gods countenance, that hath been in his company, that hath been brought into his Banqueting houſe, ſuch a one I am confident can eaſily ſpare that which moſt keep ſuch a fearful ſtir about, he can ſpare the world for them which are like to have no better a portion. Give him but more of thoſe ſpiritual pleaſures which he hath had in communion with God, and he deſires no more.

He

He can now ſpeak it, and ſpeak it in good earneſt, that there is no compariſon between this world and another; he can now call this world a ſhadow, and the glory of it graſs, and write Vanity, Emptineſs, and Vexation upon its beautiful Face, and contemn all its ſmiles and frowns, and look upon its greateſt Lovers, as perſons that deſerve to be pitied rather than envied, whoſe portion is ſo ſmall, whoſe happineſs ſo ſhort, and whoſe miſery and miſtake is ſo great and diſmal. It is a common thing for men to declaim againſt the world, and to ſay, it is but a little muck; it's no unuſual thing for its greateſt Lovers to ſpeak againſt it, and ſay, that it is that which paſſeth away; but yet for all that they purſue it more than Heaven, and are more earneſt for it, than the Salvation of their Souls, and more troubled at the thought of parting with it, than at the thought of their parting with God; and the loſs of it troubles them more than if we tell them of the loſs of their ſouls: Such as theſe will not ſay, but that God is infinitely more to be loved than the whole world; but yet if the World and God ſtand in competition, they ſtand not long diſputing which muſt give place, the World hath the uppermoſt room in the heart. But whence is this miſtake? How comes the Servant to Ride, and the Maſter to go on foot? Why is the world preferred before God? Why hence it is, men know not God, they are not acquainted with his excellency; the World is ſenſible, he ſees it, he feels it, he taſtes it, and ſo he doth not the things that are inviſible: And no wonder then, that ſenſe bares the ſway; the man wants Faith to realize inviſibles, he wants ſenſes ſpiritually

exercised. But now he that knows God, and is acquainted with spiritual things, he hath quite another apprehension of the World, and that not only from faith, but sometimes from a spiritual sense, and he can say that Divine Pleasures, Riches, and Enjoyments do as sensibly refresh him, yea, abundantly more then ever the world did. And when he hath been newly taking a walk in that heavenly Paradise, he looks back upon this World with grief and indignation, that he should ever love the world with his heart, when there was one that did infinitely more deserve his love, when there was a God, Christ, and Holiness to be loved; that he should be such a child, such a fool as to run after Butterflies, quarrel for a feather, hunt for a shadow, while God, Christ, and Glory, those great Substances lay by unregarded. Now he grudges that any thing should have his love but his God; his dearest Relations, if they stand in Gods way, must be run over, despised, hated. That which the men of the world fight, and kill, and spare not to damn their souls for, he sees now to be a pitiful worthless thing, which can't defer Death a moment, nor stand him in any stead in another world. He is all for that coin which will go current in another Country; and if he be but rich in promises, rich in spiritual relations, rich in grace, he takes himself for no unhappy man; let the world speak or think what they will of him, he doth not much pass upon it, he believes that he is but a pilgrim and stranger here, and if he meet with no great kindness, it is but that which he expected. The truth of it is, he is almost afraid of the smiles of the world, not being ignorant of this,

that

that whom it kiſſes, it intends to betray, he can't be overfond of that which in all probability will keep God and him at a greater diſtance, and make his paſſage to glory next to impoſſible. He reckons that it's better being rich in grace, then rich in purſe; and he that which lay up for his body, and provides not for his ſoul, is the greateſt fool in the world. Tell ſuch a one as *Moſes* of riches, honours, & preferments, he thinks them but poor ſorry things for a man of *Iſrael* to be taken with, and he will rather ſee them in the dirt, then part company with his ſuffering brethren, much leſs with God. It is ſtoried of *Anaxagoras*, that he ſeemed to be very little concerned when his countrey was in a flame, upon which being taxed by ſome, he made this reply, *There is none of you all care more for your countrey then I do for mine*; pointing with his finger up to heaven. Thus it is with the people of God; let others talk of Riches and Honour, but there is none of them all do value true Riches as they do; but here's the difference, one thinks he hath Riches when he hath the command of a great deal of Gold and Silver, the other knows he hath Riches when he hath Chriſt, and Grace, and can have good returns out of that other World. And which of theſe are the wiſeſt will ere long be ſeen. One looks upon heaven & glory as a ſhadow, a fable, and the things of this World, as the only realities; the other he looks upon Heaven, God and Eternity, as the greateſt realities, and moſt worthy of his higheſt valuation, and the things of this world as flying ſhadows, which can't fill the arms of him that doth imbrace them: And under this apprehenſion, and

ſenſe

ſence of things, no marvel that he doth prefer the ſubſtance before the ſhadow. He believes with that Worthy, that he was born for other things than to eat and drink, and ſleep, or to take his pleaſure, or to get an eſtate; he knows that the buſineſs in this world, is to provide for another, to get his peace made with God, to contemplate Heaven, and to get thither; and therefore you muſt not count it ſtrange, that ſuch a perſon as this is ſomewhat cold, and remiſs in his carrying on of lower deſigns; he knows that the diſproportion between Finite and Infinite, Times, and Eternity, is no ſuch inconſiderable one as the moſt count upon. Again, he hath more than once experienced this, that the very joys and comforts that are to be had in the enjoying of Communion with God, even in this world, are unſpeakably more intence and refreſhing, than the higheſt ſenſual pleaſures in the world. One that is acquainted with God, will take the word of his Friend for true, which word tells him that whatſoever is preſented to his ſence, the world and all that is therein, muſt ere long be burnt up, whereupon he thinks it no imprudence at all to hazard preſent injoyments for future hopes; no folly to look after ſomething that will be ar the ſame. He thinks it ſcarce worth the while to be born to poſſeſs, if it were a whole world, except he were ſure of having ſomething after it that were better than what he met with here; he had rather have one ſmile from his friend, than thouſands of Gold and Silver: he would not for a world be to have his portion here, though it be never ſo large a one: he had rather by far be with *Lazarus* upon a dunghil, than ſit with *Dives* in a chair of State,

State, before the richeſt fare that the Sea, or Air, or Earth could afford him: he would not change conditions with thoſe which enjoy the moſt of the things of this world: he can thankfully want that which moſt commonly makes its poſſeſſors miſerable. O could you but talk with a man that lives in Heaven while he is upon earth, and could you but ſee and here how much he ſlights that which you adore! Give me neither poverty nor riches, but Food convenient for me is the higheſt that he dare pray for: He had rather live in a ſmoaking Cottage, and have God for his companion, than dwell in the greateſt palace, and have the Devil for his Neighbour, Counſellor, Maſter. When a man hath been in Heaven by contemplation, though his body be upon the Earth, yet the beſt part of him, his affections, his love, joy, and heart, is ſtill there. *Sen. Ep.* 41. *One that doth converſe with God here, he is indeed that earthly lump, his body is below; but could you ſee his thoughts, could you look into his heart, and ſee the inward actings of his ſoul, you ſhould ſee the man out of the world diſcourſing with God, he ſticks cloſe to the company of his Friend: He is like the Sun-beams, who though they touch the earth, yet they ſtill abide there from whence they are ſent, and are moſt intenſly hot neareſt the fountain, the Sun.* So the ſoul and thoughts of a child of God, they may, nay, they can't but glance upon the world: but it's moſt vigorous ſpriteful actings are towards God, & the heat of its affections are abundantly more remiſs and cool when they beat upon earthly objects. He that knows what it is to have the company of God, is almoſt ready to wonder how any one can be content with any thing below God: and as for himſelf,

himself, he takes himself for little better then a prisoner, while his soul is pent up in a body which is so unwildly as to all spiritual employments, till it be refined by the grave. He would not be to dwell here for ever for a world, though he might enjoy more content then ever any since the Fall did. A Soul acquainted with God is a noble Creature indeed, it scorns petty low things, it thinks no Estate big enough for it, but that which is infinite; he looks upon himself as a Citizen of no mean City, a Denizen of *Zion*, a Free-man of the *New Jerusalem*, one of the Royal Society, over which Christ, that King of Glory, is the President, his inheritance is greater than that which the Sun compasseth in its course. O when (saith such a one) shall I leave these Cities of *Cabul*, and dwell with the King at *Jerusalem*! O when shall my soul be safely ark'd! O when shall I be upon the wing for Heaven! O when shall I leave this body there whence it first came! When shall I go out of this cell, this cage! O that I were once safe in Heaven! O that I were in the immediate presence of God, and might stand for ever before him, and have his blessed society for ever & ever. Neither am I now quite without him; but how little, O how little is it that now I enjoy! O when shall I enter into the possession of that better longer life! I stay & long for that separating, or rather uniting hour, which will separate my soul from my body, from my dross, but perfectly unite me to God. Look then, O my Soul, upon all that thou seest below, but as so many Inns and resting places for a Pilgrim to take some little refreshment in, and then to be gone. That day, O my fearful

Soul,

Soul, which thou ſometimes feareſt as my laſt, is the birth-day of eternity. O what mean we to love our priſons, fetters, burdens! What all we to be ſo much pleaſed with our miſeries, and afraid of our happineſs? O this unbelief! O were Chriſtians but more in the company of God by Faith and Meditation, they would look upon God as great, & the world as a very ſmall thing. He that knows God to be great, ſees every thing below him little. It is an infallible argument of a Divine and Excellent Soul, and one that hath Acquaintance with God, when he can judge all beneath God, as low, ſordid, baſe, and utterly unworthy of the reſpect of his ſoul.

4. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it will eaſe us of all ſorrows, or cure all ſorrows. As ſoon as any one hath but a ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, he is in ſuch a condition as that he need not trouble his head with care, nor his heart with fear; no more then a rich Heir that hath a tender-hearted, loving, wiſe Father, need not trouble himſelf what he ſhall do for bread and cloathing: as long as the great cauſe of fear is taken away, ſo long he is well enough. As for thoſe that are unacquainted with God, they either are always afraid, or have cauſe always to be afraid: but as for a Child of God, that Scripture bears up his Soul under the mightieſt waves of fear, *There is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, Rom.* 8. 1. He that is in Covenant with God, may in this world undergo ſome petty injures, ſome inſurrections may be made againſt him; but this is his comfort, he is ſure never to be quite over-powered, never to be finally conquered! O the diſquietments and fears

fears that ſtrangers and enemies are compaſſed with, or will be! And O the joys, the ſecurity, the true ſecurity that ſome have; at what a rate do they live! and how bravely do they die! mark the perfect, and behold the upright man; for the end of that man is peace. This was touched upon before, when I opened the nature and qualifications of this friend, and therefore I need ſay the leſs hear; yet it being the great inquiry of the wiſeſt, how they may be ſheltered from this ſtorm? What ſhall they do to be cured of theſe heart qualms? How they may be freed from fears? I ſhall not altogether paſs it over in this place. I can't but incourage poor ſtrangers, as they value the trueſt comforts, as they would be free from fear and trembling when the Foundations of the Earth ſhall be ſhaken, when the Mountains ſhall tremble, and melt at the preſence of God, the mighty God of *Jacob*, when the Heavens ſhall be rouled together as a Scroul, and be all of a flame. Make ſure of this Friend! it is impoſſible that one that hath ſuch a one for his friend ſhould much be daunted, when he hears of Wars, and Rumors of Wars, when the Peſtilence rages, when there are dreadful Earthquakes in ſundry places, and ſuch diſtreſs of Nations and perplexities, that the ſtouteſt heart ſhall ſink that hath not this to ſupport: Then a Child of God may lift up his head with comfort, becauſe his redemption draweth near. There is a vaſt difference between a godly man and a wicked, as to their affections, fears, joys, deſires, hope. The godly thinks long for that, which the wicked wiſhes withal his heart might never be; the Day of Judgment. The righteous

righteous man is even delighted with the forethoughts of that, the thoughts of which doth put a damp upon all the comforts of the ungodly, he rejoyceth in that which makes his Neighbour to tremble. As for death, a gracious heart that hath kept his watch, and maintained a ſweet & conſtant correſpondency with God, and hath had his heart in heaven, and can look upon the great *Jehovah* as his friend, can't be very much affrighted at his approach: He is not much appaled, when he looks out at the window, & ſees this meſſenger making haſt to his houſe; and when he knocks at his door, he dares let him in, and can heartily bid him welcome; he underſtands whence he comes, and what his errand is, & though he look ſomwhat grimly, yet as long as he comes to conduct him to his friends houſe, he can diſpence with that: he hath more reaſon to ſpeake it then he which did. (*Plotinus*) *Let me make haſte away to my Country; there are my excellent Anceſtors, there dwell my noble Relations, there is the conſtant reſidence of my deareſt Friends.* (Tull.) *O happy will that day be when I ſhall come into that glorious aſſembly, when I ſhall have better company then* Homer, Orpheus, Socrat. Cato, *when I ſhall ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac, & Jacob, *in the Palace of their Friend and mine! O happy day when I ſhall come to my Fathers houſe, to that general Aſſembly, the Church of the Firſt born, to an innumerable company of Angels, to Jeſus, the Mediator of the New-Covenant, and to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.* A mans knowledg of other things may add to his fears, and make his miſeries greater: But the more knowledg we have of God, the leſs our fears and ſorrows muſt needs be: and when our knowledg

of

of God is perfect, all our fears and sorrow shall be for ever blown over. I can't omit a brave speech of that noble Stoick which comes to my mind, *Ar. Epist. l. 1. c. 7. (If the acquaintance and favour of Cæsar can keep you (as you are made to believe) from some fears? how much rather to have God for your Father and Friend? how little cause have such to be afraid, at any time of any thing. Death it self is not evil to a friend of God: he may say, come, let us go quickly to our Fathers house, our Father calls us.* And doth this seem a small matter to you, believe it, when you come to dye, you will be of another mind then: you will think thats a cordial worth any mony, that wil raise your spirits at such a time, & make you with a smiling countenance, to passe into an everlasting state. It is but a folly to expect that any thing in the world should do this for us, but the knowledg of our interest in God. It's possible indeed to get some stupifying intoxicating stuff, that makes a man to dye like a beast, without any great horror, the Devils shop will furnish poor dying Creatures with enough of that; Nay, he is glad if he can keep men a sleep till death awaken them; but miserable is that man who is beholding to the Devil for his Cordials; miserable is he who hath nothing to keep him from a Hell upon Earth, but his own ignorance, and the Devils word. I promise you, 'tis none of the joyfullest spectacles to an inlightned Soul, to look upon one that lived wickedly, and died peaceably. You would think, that a poor man, that is going to Execution, had little cause to smile, though he should Ride to the Gallows upon an easie going Horse, or in a Coach. The Swine is usually very still, when the Butcher is

scraping

ſcraping away the hair of his Throat in order to the Sticking of him. It's no unuſual thing for a vile unſanctified ſinner, to leap with a mad confidence into eternity; but he alone hath a ſolid peace, who hath God for his friend. This is the only man hath juſt cauſe to ſing for joy, when his ſoul is going into another world. It was none of the worſt counſel which he gave, whoſoever he was who ſaid, that it doth highly concern us ſeriouſly to think of terrible things which we muſt moſt certainly ſee ere long, and to lay in ſuch proviſion as may make us fit to grapple with them when they come, O for that which will keeps us, from crying out hereafter? what ſhall I do? wo is me, I am undon: were it ſo that there were ſuch rare extraction to be made which would certainly prolong our lives as long as we would, and make us always cheerful, what ſtriving would there be to get ſuch a receipt! O how would the great ones bring out their bags to purchaſe it at any rate! How willingly would they mortgage all their Lands, part with their richeſt Jewels to buy it! & yet how little will they exſpend for that, which if they had, would prove far more effectual! O would men and women but underſtand themſelves, and mind their buſineſs, what ſweet lives might they lead, what a calm might there be conſtantly upon their Spirits! How cheerfully might they live! and how joyfully might they dye! *Tully* ſaith, that he and many others had been gathering the moſt powerfull herbs that they could find to cure all fears; but, ſaith he, *I know not what is the matter, the diſeaſe is ſtill ſtronger then the remedy.* And doſt thou not know, O *Tully*, what's the matter? why then I

will tell thee, One principal Ingredient was left out, *viz*, Faith in the Bloud of Christ, and Union with God by vertue of that bloud. He that is by Christ brought acquainted with God, need not much fear griefs, sorrows, and such things Christ was acquainted with for him; he hath unsting'd Death, and sweetened the Grave: all his troubles are now but as Physick, the Poyson of them is corrected; though the Pill be bitter, yet it's of his Friends composing, and therefore you may take it without any turning away of your head. *Shew me a man* (said old *Epictetus*) *that is happy, truly in his life, and happy in his death; happy in his health, & in his sickness; happy when poor, scorned, tormented and vanished; in a word, happy in all conditions.* O that I could but talk with such a man! O that I could see such a spectacle! such a one as my eyes never yet beheld. Why, I will tell thee the reason of it, O *Epictetus*, It is because thou never sawest a Christian, one that was acquainted with God; for let me tell the world, *Through Grace I have seen such a sight, and do believe it to be the most lovely sight on this side Heaven.* I have seen one smiling when his Jaws have been falling, and eye-strings breaking; rejoycing, when most about him were weeping, and accounting it a high act of patience to be willing to live; and how do you like such a condition? Is it better to lie quivering, shaking and groaning, or rejoycing and praysing, and admiring of free grace, and setting forth the riches of Gods love and goodnesse: which of these would you chuse? I can easily believe that few are so bad, but that they could be contented as well as *Balaam* to dye the death of the righteous, and to have their latter

end

end like his? But would you dye joyfully? why then, you must live holily; get acquainted with God, and then this may be your state. I remember *Seneca* speaks of one *Pacuvius*, who when he was drunk, cry'd out βεβιοκα (*I have been alive*) very merrily. But had he well understood himself, he would have thought be had had much better reason to have cryed out, *I am dead, I am dead.* But however, what he said ungroundly and wickedly, a child of God may easily and thankfully say; when he is going to his last sleep, he may with joy and cheerfulness say, I have lived, and through grace, I have kept a fair correspondency with my God, my Friend, whom I am now going to dwell with for ever. Do not think therefore that I come to take away your comforts and joys, when I come to perswade you to get acquaintance with God, no such matter, I would have you learn to rejoyce, but yet I would that that joy, should be born from above, that the foundation of it should be the knowledg of your interest in Gods love. Other joys may make you have a smiling countenance, but they do not raise and fill the Soul; for I must tell you, I am far from thinking that every one that laughs, is joyful, and without fears. Give me a man that knows that God is his portion, and Heaven his inheritance, that knows with what Friend, and in what a happy state he shall live in after death; this, this is the cheerful man: such one as this is can overlook momentany sorrows; he understands full well that the case will be quickly altered with him; and the thoughts of Eternal happiness do swallow up his temporal miseries: Tell one of Gods acquaintance, of po-

verty, he values is not, as long as he knows he hath a brave eſtate that can't be confiſcated, riches that none can take from him, a treaſure that thieves can't break through to, and ſteal. As for all worldly things, he knows that before a few years are over, he muſt part with them however; he is of that mans mind, who having a conſiderable ſum of money, and precious Jewels hid in his ſaddle, and a little odd mony in his pocket, was ſet upon by thieves; who readily went to his pocket, and took what was there, and look't no further: Now the man ſcaping clear with his main treaſure, is ſo joyful that he takes no notice of what was ſtole from him. Thus a child of God, if he loſe his eſtate, his liberty, and all his outward injoyments, he counts all theſe but inconſiderable, as long as his Soul is ſafe, his great treaſure is out of their reach. Tell him of torments, racks, flames, or what the policy of Hell can invent, he is not ignorant of this, that the more he ſuffers for Chriſts ſake, the greater cauſe he hath to rejoyce, to be exceeding glad, for great ſhall be his reward in heaven, and while they add to his ſufferings, they add to his glory; and, though againſt their will, while they would injure him, they do him the greateſt kindneſs; this light affliction works for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. As long as his torments want that dreadful Epithite, *Eternal*, he doth not much paſs; the thoughts of Gods love makes mans hatred inconſiderable? O how ſweet are the thoughts of his Friend, when his enemies are moſt bitter. Bleſſed be God as for thoſe intolerable torments, he knows it's beyond mans power, and far from Gods will to inflict-

inflict them upon him, and ſo long he cares not much. All other tortures are but a Flea-bite to the pains of Hell, and an enraged Conſcience; he can almoſt dare the world & the devil to do their worſt, as being confident of this, that as long as he is dear to God, his Soul is out of their reach. Threaten him with baniſhment, he remembers, that he hath a friend that will find him out, and bear him company whereſoever he is. Tell him of the barbarous unkindneſs and treachery of former Friends; he reads that his betters have been worſe handled by their pretended Friends; above all, this cheers him, to think that all his Friends will not ſerve him ſo, he hath one Friend that will never forſake him, never be unfaithful to him. Now bring a wicked man upon Earth, that is without his ſorrows, I know there is none, no not one; there is none of them all, but if he were within the ſight of thoſe devouring flames, would tremble. Thoſe that have wickedneſs enough to dare God, will not have courage enough to look him in the face, when he ſhall appear in flaming fire, to execute vengeance upon the ungodly; he that will not now be troubled at the doing of wickedneſs, will be troubled hereafter at the ſuffering for it. Let ſinners ſay what they will, I am ſure they can't be long without fears, to behold Chriſt, and his dear Servants coming together in the Clouds with Millions of mighty Angels to judge the world; I am confident it will be ſuch an amazing ſight as can't chooſe but cool their courage, and make the ſtouteſt heart of them all to ake; I am ſure that as light as they make of Damnation, and Gods diſpleaſure, that the day

is coming, when they will believe it was no ſuch cowardiſe to be afraid of an angry God, to flye from the wath to come, and to run away from ſo formidable an enemy as ſin. So that it's clear, that a wicked man will firſt or laſt be a fearfull man; a *Magor miſſakib*, *Fear on every ſide*, ſhall be his name. But now he that doth exceedingly fear to offend God, need not exceedingly to fear any thing elſe; and he that fears not God, hath cauſe enough to fear every thing? O Sirs, it's a brave thing to be able to take death cheerfully by the hand, and to walk with him joyfully into another world; and this I ſay again a man acquainted with God may do; he hath this to comfort him, death doth more properly give him life, then take it away from him; and that as ſoon as he is dead his ſin ſhall dye too, and his grace live and act without controul; then he ſhall live a life, of joy, a life of perfect holineſs, ſuch a life as Saints and Angels live, ſuch a life as Chriſt lives, the life of God, a life without death, an everlaſting life; and why then ſhould he be afraid of dying? As for his old Companion the body, it is gon to reſt, and will ere long be awakened, and riſe from his bed more vigorous and fit for thoſe Noble imployments which it muſt be engaged in for ever: and Soul and Body ſhall meet with more comfort, then now they part with pain, when the body ſhall be in another kind of dreſs then now it wears, and that alſo ſhall in ſome reſpects be like the Soul, agil, holy, immortal. This is ſuch a man that I can call happy, and ſo ere long will thoſe that now ſcorn and perſecute him, call him too. Bleſſed is he that in his life is holy, and cheerful, but moſt cheerful and perfect at his death

death. This is the happy portion of Gods acquaintance, this is the heritage of the Friends of the Bridegroom. I have read of a wise man, that would commend, and be thankful for every thing, because he was sure a friend of his had the management of every thing. whose understanding was infinite, and whose wisdom was unsearchable, who could & would work his own honour and his Friends comfort out of every thing, yea, though seemingly evil; for the greater the evil seems to be, the greater will be the real kindness which makes so much good out of it. O but I have lately lost many of my most neer and precious relations? If thou art one of Gods Friends, let me tell thee for thy comfort, you will meet them at your Friends house, when you come thither. It was no unsuitable advice that he gave to his Friend *Lucilius*, to cheer him up after the loss of a dear Friend, Let us consider my dear *Lucilius*, that we our selves should be glad to be in that place, and to enjoy that company, which you are so sad that your Friend is gon to; and he that you say is lost, is not so, but happy before you. We do not judge rightly of things. Well then, would you know what a man is? would you pass a true estimate of him, and understand his worth and value? Why then consider the man without his riches, lay aside his honours, take away all his externals from him; nay further, lets see the man raked out of his body, and how doth the Soul look? is it now rich, beautiful, joyful? can it stand confidently before God? doth it appear cheerfully in the presence of it's maker? Why, this is something; It matters not much whether his body were fed

with Pulſe or Dainties, cloathed with Rags or Scarlet, it matters not whether his Soul went out of his mouth, or at a wound; whether he dyed in bed of doun, or in flames. Methinks, by this time you ſhould be ready to think that Religion is an excellent thing, that Gods acquaintance is deſirable, and that no life is like the life of a Chriſtian, all whoſe ſorrows end in joys, whoſe miſeries make him more happy, whoſe ſhame for Chriſt will make for his glory; In a word, whoſe death brings him into life. *This is the generation of them that ſeek thee, that ſeek thy face, O Jacob.*

5. Another effect of acquaintance with God, is, That it will make us more highly to honour him. Here familiarity is far from breeding contempt. Thoſe that are ſtangers to God ſee not his worth and excellency, they honour him not, but they have the moſt vile, low, contemptible thoughts of the infinitely glorious Majeſty, and they think any thing will ſerve his turn, they make more bold with him then they would do with a man like themſelves, they put him off with the leavings of the world: When they have been feeding their luſts, and ſerving their pleaſures, and gratifying the Devil all the day long, then they come between ſleep and awake, and pretend a great deal of love to him, and anger with themſelves for their ſin, whereas God knows, they do but play the hyprocrites in all they do, & mean nothing that they ſay: Lip-devotion, knee-religion God ſhall have, and but a little of that too; and that pitiful ſtuff that they preſent him with, they think God is very much beholding to them for. As for the ſanctifying the Lord God

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in their hearts; as for inward hearty-love; as for high prizings and admirings of God, as for a real honouring of God, and worſhipping of him in Spirit, and in Truth, it is that which they underſtand not; and as for them which do, they laugh at them, as if they were guilty of the greateſt folly in the world. But now he which converſeth with God, beholds ſuch a beauty, excellency, majeſty, and glory in him, that it is ready quite to ſwallow up his ſoul; he ſpeaks much of God, but yet he thinks more; he wonders that a God of ſuch infinite goodneſs ſhould be no more loved, that a God of ſuch infinite greatneſs, juſtice and holineſs ſhould be no more feared, that a God of ſuch unſpeakable power ſhould be no more obeyed; and while he remembers his own contempt of God in former times, and the too mean thoughts that he hath at preſent of him, he doth even ſtand aſtoniſhed to think that he ſhould be on this ſide the ſtate of the damned. He that before thought every thing too much for God, now thinks nothing enough for him. The man is ſtrangely changed by his new acquaintance, ſo that he may not improperly be called a *New man*, all things are new with him. In honor to this new gueſt, he hath got on new cloaths, he is cl[illegible] with Righteouſneſs, as with a garment: new food, it is his meat and drink to do the will of his Father which is in Heaven; new drink, Wine on the Lees well refined, he draws all out of thoſe wells of Conſolation, the Promiſes: he hath new thoughts, words, and actions; God, inviſibles, and all the things of faith are now Subſtances with him. Now the threats or promiſes of a God are not counted ſmall matters;

Heaven

Heaven, Hell, and Eternity go for the greateſt Realities, becauſe God ſaith they are ſuch. So he that ſometimes lived without God in the world, had no reſpect at all to his glory, but valued himſelf and his moſt baſe luſt, and the Devil himſelf before God, doth now reſpect Gods glory in all that he doth, he ventures upon nothing deliberately, but what may pleaſe him; Religion runs through all he doth; he eats, he drinks, and ſleeps, and cloaths himſelf, he prayes, he works, he recreates himſelf with a deſign for God. The grand project he ſtill is carrying on, is the honour of God. He will undertake nothing of importance, before he conſult with, and hath the advice and direction of his Friend. Whatſoever he hath that is worth any thing, he ſends it to this Friend, he preſents him with his firſt fruits, he ſacrificeth his male, the beſt of his flock; deſires that his Friend may be always at his houſe, and that he may have the beſt entertainment that he can poſſibly give; and he is aſhamed at the beſt, that he can make him no more welcome, whom he ſo highly honours; he is grieved that his entertainment is no better; he would fain give God his firſt and laſt thoughts, his warmeſt affections; he would gladly have the ſtrength and vigour of body and ſoul ſpent in his ſervice; he ſtudies how to improve all mercies and enjoyments, for God, to take hold of all opportunities that he can poſſibly, and to make the beſt of them for the promoting that grand Deſign which he hath on foot, his Honour. He thinks not wife and children, houſes and lands, body, ſoul, and all that he can make in the world too good for him. Whatever temptations he

conquers,

conquers, whatsoever sin he slayes, whatsoever piece of gallantry or prowess he hath done in his inrods upon Satans Kingdom, he gives the honour of all to the valour, conduct, and assistance of this his noble Ally and Friend. He sets the Crown of the King of *Ammon*, like *Joab*, upon the head of this King *David*. He hath such a high esteem for God, that he thinks nothing well done but when it is done exactly as he would have it; he thinks every thing then best, when it is done, according to Gods will: and he counts it no small weakness to be unwilling that infinite Wisdom rather then folly should have the managing of all the affairs of the world. He desires to maintain a quick and lively sense of the Divine Majesty upon his Soul, and that he may here and hereafter give him, as he hath infinite cause, all honour, glory, and praise.

6. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God is this, It would put abundance of life and vigour into the soul; it would, as it were, oyl the wheels, and set them a running. There are none in the world that act at so high a rate as those do, which are most acquainted with God. O how undefatigable are they in their pains! with what earnestness and faith do they pray! as if they saw the glorious God before them, and were talking with him: with what reverence, seriousness and delight do they read, meditate and hear the Word, and do all that they do! They know in some measure what it is to present their bodies and souls as a living sacrifice to God through Christ; they understand what it means to be fervent in spirit serving the Lord: they will not serve God with that which cost

them

them nothing, kneeling down, and ſaying a few formal words before God in the evening, repeating the Lords Prayer, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments between ſleeping and waking, doing no body any wrong, and the like, is not enough to ſerve his turn, his conſcience will not be thus put off; but he labours with all his might to ſtir up his ſoul to lay hold upon God, he is not content to go off from his knees without his Fathers bleſſing. This is the Friend and Acquaintance of God, this is the brave *Iſraelite*, that ſpiritual Prince that will not let God go till he hath prevailed with him. He doth not go to his work, as if he cared not whether he work'd or no; he is not ſick of the ſervice of God, but he rejoyceth and works righteouſneſs; his work is his pleaſure, and he goes on merrily with his buſineſs. Thoſe that are intimately acquainted with God, are not ſo cold, faint, and dull in the ſervice of God, as others be. Such a one as knows God very well, and hath been oft made welcome by him; why, he comes with a great deal of confidence, and knocks at Gods door, and, for his part, he will not go away, though the door be not preſently opened, but he continues knocking becauſe he is ſure that his Friend is within, he knows that he is never from home, and that he can never come unſeaſonably to him. He comes to Prayer as if he were going to ſtorm Heaven, he gets ſpiritual things by violence, he comes to Duty as to fight for a Crown, he is aſhamed to offer the lame and the blind to God, but he chooſeth for the beſt in his flock; he deſires to improve his intereſt in God to the height, this favourite of Heaven comes frequently to the

King

King to beg ſome great thing or other, and he is ſure that his Friend will deny him nothing, that it is not a greater kindneſs to deny then give; he knows that his King hath a large purſe, and as large a heart, and he is not willing to loſe ſuch excellent things that are to be had for the asking for; he is not ignorant that Spiritual things are worth the ſeeking for, and therefore he will ſeek and ſeek earneſtly; he hath tried more then once, and he remembers to his joy, that wonderful things are to be had, if we will but take pains for them, and prefer our Petitions, or rather get them preferr'd by that great Maſter of Requeſt, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and follow our buſineſs cloſe, that it can't poſſibly miſcarry let it be what it will; the comfort in enjoying will abundantly pay all the charges we can be at in ſeeking; therefore he layes about him as one that is in good earneſt; the confidence that he hath in the good will of God, it puts life into all his petitions. A poor Creature that very rarely injoys any communion with God, that is very little or not at all acquainted with him, is ready to take up with a few formal complemental performances, he is weary of his work before he hath well begun it, he is quickly out of breath; but now one that is very well acquainted with God, is not ſo ſoon weary of his company; it may be, he may be ſomewhat cold when he ſets out, but by that time he hath gon a few turns with his Friend, his blood grows warm, he is ſometimes ſo taken up with God in duty, that he can ſcare tell when to have don? O he thinks it's good being there? O it was a ſweet ſeaſon! Theſe are the actings and experiences

ſome

ſome Noble Soule. I have heard ſome Chriſtians ſay, that had not God made it their duty to follow their callings, they could be glad with all their hearts to do nothing elſe, day nor night, but hear the myſteries of Gods love in Chriſt opened, Read, Pray, Meditate, and be immediately engaged in the ſervice of God. Sure ſomething is the matter with theſe perſons more then ordinary, that their Palate ſhould be ſo Spiritualiſed, as that it is their Food, their Wine, their Dainties, to be actually imployed in the great acts of Religion. The more any one is acquainted with God, the more delight he takes in the Ordinances of God; as one of Gods Children, he deſires the ſincere milk of the word: before he was acquainted with God, he found it far otherwiſe; then nothing almoſt would down with him, the pure word could not be reliſhed, except it was adulterated with flouriſhes of humane wit. He had very little appetite to good wholſome Food, his ſtomack was ready to turn at it, except it were ſo cook't and ſawc't, and ſet out, that an underſtanding man could ſcarce tell what to make of it! What do you ſay to this, you that are ſo faint and cold, in what you do, in the ſervice of God? Come a little nearer, get better acquainted with God, and you ſhall find ſuch entertainment from him, that you will ſcarce be able to keep long from his houſe; get oft into his company, and you ſhall feel your Soul ſtrengthned with new ſpirits, animated with a ſtrange life, Heat and Warmth. You will not complain that the Sabbath is the longeſt day in the week; you will not ſay, *what a wearineſs is it? When will the new Moons and Sabbaths be*

all

at an end? But you would think long till the Sabbath day come, and when it is come, the pleaſure that you take in the work of that day would make you to think it the ſhorteſt day, and gon too ſoon; and when you have ſpent it in the moſt diligent attendance upon God, you would wiſh it were to begin again, or that you were to begin ſuch a Sabbath, that would never have an end. This is the condition of one that is very intimately acquainted with God; his nearneſs to his Maſter, makes him to follow his work, and he knows he ſhall loſe nothing by it; ſomething will be coming in ere and anon, which will more then quit his coſt: So that when God calls, he is at hand, and readily anſwers, *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* When God hath any meſſage, any hot ſervice to do, he accounts it his great honour to be imployed in it, and ſaith, here I am, ſend me. I believe he that ſpoke it (*Ar. Ep. l. c. 9.*) might be a little confident, when he ſaid, *Lay what thou wilt upon me, O God, I have power to bear it, it ſhall not be my Burden, but my Ornament*: Yet I am perſwaded one that is acquainted with God, can ſay it, and ſay it again in good earneſt; Lord what wilt thou have me to do? wilt thou have me to preach for thee, to run through Fire and Water for thee, to dye for thee, to go or come? O Lord do but bare me company, and give me ſtrength, and it ſhall be don: I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me. This is one of Gods Champions, he watches, he keeps upon his guard, he fights ſtoutly, he ſtands his ground, in every thing he demeans himſelf gallantly, he quits himſelf like a Souldier of Chriſt; and that which makes him thus valiant,

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is becauſe he is ſo near his Captain. Ask *Epictetus* what made *Socrates* do as he did, and he will tell you (*l.* 3. *c.* 22) *It was becauſe he was a Friend of God, his Servant, and partaker of his Kingdom.* This is ſtrang Language of a Heathen! but had he known what it was to live under the moſt lively ſence of Gods love, to have had ſuch intimate converſe with him, as ſome Chriſtians have had, what would he have ſaid? As for the Saint that keeps cloſe to God, he keeps cloſe to duty; his work is to ſerve, love, and praiſe God: this is his buſineſs, both by himſelf, and with others.

7. Another excellent effect of this acquaintance with God, is, it will make a man Patient under all the diſpenſations of Gods providence, in all conditions to be content, in quietneſſe to poſſeſs his Spirit: Acquaintance with God will make him be at peace, not to open his mouth againſt God, whatſoever he lays upon him. What was it that kept ſuch a calm in *Pauls* heart, when there was ſuch a conſtant ſtorm without him? was it not his ſence of his intereſt in Gods love? though all the world were his enemies, yet as long as Chriſt was his Friend, he doth not care; though men and devils be againſt him, yet if God be for him, he paſſeth not much upon it: though men be never ſo unjuſt: yet God will never be ſo, that's his comfort. It's a ſmall matter for him to be judged with mans judgment, as long as he is ſure that God will acquit him; he knows that juſtice it ſelf will do him no wrong, infinite goodneſs could not be unkind, and that wiſdom it ſelf could work glorious effects out of theſe things, which the world call evil; if he do receive evil at the

the hands of God, he is confident he deſerves more ; if it be good, and but a little, he is thankful, becauſe he deſerved none at all. Let the worſt come to the worſt, if all the Devils in Hell, and all his inſtruments upon Earth ſhould combine againſt him, as long as he is ſure of the love of God, and that none of them all, can pluck him out of the Arms of the Almighty, he is not very much concerned ; Heaven will make amends for all : whatſoever he ſuffers, it is nothing to the diſpleaſure of a God, it is nothing to everlaſting burnings. He believes that if his perſecutors did know what he knows, they would as ſoon eat fire, as do as they do ; therefore he rather pitties them, then is angry with them, as ſeeing that their day is coming ! How ſeldom have you either *Paul* or *Silas* complaining of their ſufferings! How rarely bemoaning their condition ? And what is it that makes them ſo patient ? what have they to ſweeten ſuch bitter draughts ? Why, God loves them ; and ſo long, they do not much care though others hate them. Mans frown can't ſink a Soul to Hell, nor his favour make one happy for ever. It is but a little while, and all tears ſhall be wiped away from their eyes. The kindneſs, and faithfulneſs of God is enough to make a man cheerfully to hold up his head, when all the world is againſt him. When the moſt Spiritual Chriſtians do complain, it is more of themſelves, then of their perſecutors ! O my unbelieving heart ! O that I ſhould love God no more ! O that my heart ſhould be no more taken up with the great things of Eternity ! This is the condition which thoſe that are moſt Spiritual, are in Poverty, Impriſonment, Baniſhment, and all

 theſe

theſe things which moſt call dreadful, when they come to a man that is much in Communion with God, they find him Patient, Meek and Calm, theſe are not the things which put him upon the rack; God is his Friend, and that anſwers all.

8. Another glorious effect of Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make all our enjoyments doubly ſweet. He hath what he hath in love; he need not be afraid of poyſon in any of thoſe Dainties which comes from his deareſt Friend's Table; he may eat his meat with a joyful heart, and not tremble for fear of the reckoning at laſt; what he enjoys is freely given him; all his Diſhes have this brave Sauce, they are ſeaſon'd with Love, and come out of the hand of a Father. He that is the great Proprietor, hath given him leave to uſe theſe things, and hath promiſed alſo to give him better things then theſe. He knows that this is not his portion, that this is nothing to what he ſhall poſſeſs; it is no ſmall comfort to him, to think that he ſhall never want any thing that is needful for him, or that if he be brought into ſome exigences, he hath a Friend that he can go to when he will, and be heartily welcome; he hath a portion, an eſtate in another Country that can never be ſpent, though he live at never ſo high a rate, and the more he ſpends upon it, the greater it is; he hath a key to that Storehouſe which can never be emptied; he hath an intereſt in him in whom all fulneſs doth dwell: his Friend is noble, let him *but ask and he ſhall have, ſeek and he ſhall find, knock & it ſhall be opened unto him.* God is ſo free that he takes care of all his Creatures; yea, ſo great is his Royal Bounty, that it doth largely provide for

for his enemies? and shall his friends, his children starve? Hath he not done so in ancient dayes? when his people were in the wilderness he sent them their Dyet from his own house, he fed them with Angels food. But if this should not be, if he kept them short, that may be done with as great kindness to them as the former: fasting may fatten the soul more then feasting doth the body; and this makes all welcome. If he have a great deal, he rejoyceth to think that he shall have more still one day; if he have but a little he is satisfied; and so his condition is made more comfortable to him, then the greatest enjoyments of the wicked are to them.

9. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God, is, That it will make a man wise. He that before he was acquainted with God had not the wit to know his Friends from his Foes, by his converse with God is made more wise then the great Sages and grand Politicians of the world. Upon his acquaintance with God, he is soon able to know right from wrong, to distinguish between good and evil. He hath now the wisdom to look after the salvation of his soul, to seek the Kingdom of Heaven in the first place, and not to be laughed and jeered into Hell. He is so wise, that he doth outwit the Devil himself; he doth get so much wisdom by his acquaintance with God, that God will reveal many of his great secrets to him. I know one my self that was little different from those which are commonly called *Naturals*, whom when the Lord had wonderfully wrought upon, and brought near to himself, after his converse and acquaintance with God, his very natural understanding was exceedingly re-

refined, and afterward he became more diſcreet and fit to manage worldly affairs. But however this be, I am ſure the knowledge of God gives underſtanding to the ſimple. *A good underſtanding have they which love the Lord: and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom.* Converſe with men of wiſdom doth not a little improve a man; but converſe with the wiſe God it makes a ſtrange alteration indeed, they are made wiſe unto Salvation. Of ſuch as theſe *David* thought it beſt to make his Privy Council. Theſe are the perſons that are the fitteſt to adviſe with in buſineſſes of the greateſt importance in the world; they have learned the art of managing the affairs of greateſt concernment with the greateſt care and prudence. I know the wiſe world uſually look upon theſe perſons, as the veryeſt fools living. To converſe with God, to take all poſſible *care to make their calling and election ſure*, to do what one can to be happy for ever, goes amongſt them for a ridiculous thing, and more then needs. But it is no great matter, they will not be beat from their work thus; they ſhould be fools indeed, if ſuch things as theſe ſhould make them turn their backs upon God; they will not be jeer'd out of Heaven, they paſs not upon mans cenſures. He is wiſe that God calls ſo, and he will be found to be a fool which God ſaith is ſo. As for the man that is acquainted with God, all his actions ſpeak him a man of prudence, one that hath a deep reach with him, he is a man of an excellent foreſight, he ſees the clouds a gathering a great way off, the ſtorm before it riſeth, and he hides himſelf, in him are hid the treaſures of wiſdom, he makes no fooliſh choice, he is a child

of

of wiſdom; he doth in ſome meaſure underſtand himſelf, and knows where his intereſt lies, and is faithful to it; he makes no fooliſh bargains, when he parts with Dung for Diamonds, Braſs for Gold, Earth for Heaven, Sin for Holineſs, preſent ſhort-liv'd Pleaſures for ſure & everlaſting Delights, the Devil for God. How ſay you, ye mad Gallants, that look upon the Saint as a Fool, and Religion as a ridiculous thing? Are theſe ſuch fooliſh actings? is it ſo undiſcreet a choice to prefer Heaven before Hell? If this be to be a fool, I wiſh I were more ſuch a fool; if this be ſo contemptible a thing, O that I may yet be more vile! Let me ſay further, as great a folly as it is, there are none of you all, but ere long will wiſh you had been ſuch fools. A few years will make you all of another mind, when you ſee what thoſe that you counted fools have got, and what you with your wiſdom have loſt; then let's hear you calling them fools for chuſing Chriſt for their portion; and your ſelf wiſe for deſpiſing him, and chuſing of this preſent world for your portion. Now, it is their being acquainted with God, that hath made them thus wiſe; time was, that they were as very fools as any in the world, till they fell into Gods company; and ever ſince that, they have acted with a great deal more prudence: their being much in Gods company hath much improved them. They may thank God for all that skill that they have attained to; for he it is that teached them, he is always at their elbow to direct them; when they are about to be cheated, he whiſpers them in the ear, lets them underſtand the fraud; and when God ſpeaks, they liſten to his counſel. It was no

falshood which *Seneca* spake (though he understood not the meaning of this Doctrine of Reconciliation) in the commendation of Wisdom. *Wisdom* (saith he) *is a great spacious thing, it instructs us both in Divine and Humane things, it teacheth a man how to demean himself in relation to things, past, present, and to come: it informs him about things that are fading, and things that are lasting, and by it he knows how to put a true estimate and value on both: this learns one the difference between Time and Eternity.* Thus far *Seneca*, But where is this Wisdom to be found? not in *Aristotle* nor *Plato's* writings. The grand Maximes of this Wisdom were little understood in the *Peripatetick* or *Stoick* schools; Flesh & Blood, Humane Wisdom improv'd to the height, reveal not these things to us. Where then is this Wisdom to be found? and where is the place of understanding? man knows not the price of it naturally: The Depth saith, It is not in me, it can't be got for Silver; &c. Destruction and Death say, we have heard the fame thereof with our ears. There is talk of Wisdom in Hell, there they can say what reports were made to them of the Excellencies of Christ, and how earnestly they were offered to be instructed in the ways of Wisdom. But in Hell there is Wisdom, though the world of them, which by their wisdom, knew not God be there: where then is wisdom? God understands the way of it, and he teacheth man wisdom, and those that will come to him, submit to his instructions, may learn: the Lesson is short, yet learnt but by few; he tells man, that to fear and love his Maker, and to be brought into Union, Friendship, and Acquaintance with God, that is Wisdom, and to depart

from

from iniquity, that is underſtanding, *Job* 28. 12. 13. 14, &c.

10. Another effect of this Acquaintance with God, is, It will make a man rich. As ſoon as any one is acquainted with God, he is ſet in a thriving way. Man at the firſt had his eſtate in his own hands, and he kept up his Trade for a little time, and but for a little time; for though his ſtock was great, yet meeting with the Serpent that great Cheater, he was miſerably overreached, and ſo ſadly impaired in his Spiritual Eſtate, that he broke preſently; and had not Jeſus Chriſt ſtept in and bayled him, and been his ſurety, he would ſoon have had all his Creditors upon his back, and have been laid up in that diſmal priſon, till he ſhould have paid the utmoſt farthing; but through the kindneſs of Chriſt the grand Creditor had patience & offers to make up the buſineſs, & to compound upon better tearms then the ſinner could poſſibly expect. Chriſt undertakes to heal the infinite breach, to bring God and Man acquainted, & to ſet him up again, in caſe he will but accept of the gracious terms of agreement; and thus undon man that was before in a beggarly condition, upon his return to God, is ſet in a better way then ever; God his Friend now takes ſuch order for him, that he ſhall be ſure never to break again; he will be his Caſh-keeper, he will have the overſight of all, he will teach him ſuch an art, that he ſhall be ſure to get by every thing that he trades in, he ſhall gain by his loſſes, grow rich by his poverty, and drive the beſt trade it may be, when he is forced to ſhut his Shop doors, I mean in a time of a violent perſecution. Whatſoever loſſes or croſſes

come, he is ſure he ſhall never be undon as long as his Friend hath ſo great a bank; he hath a key, and he can go to an infinite Treaſury, when he pleaſeth, and fetch out ſupplies for any exigencies or occaſions; and when all thoſe that made ſuch a great ſhow in the World, and that were taken for Merchants, that were exceeding well to paſs, ſhall be proclaimed Bankrupts, and be found not worth a Farthing, and be carryed to priſon for debt; then he hath mony in his purſe, coyn that will go currant in any Country. In the mean time, though he be thought to be worth nothing, to drive but a pittiful poor trade, yet when he comes to dye, and when an exact inventory is taken of all that he is worth, he is found worth thouſands: and no wonder when he hath ſuch a Partner, that will be ſure to ſee that his buſineſs ſhall be managed to the beſt advantage, and that he ſhall never be out of purſe; upon this account, the man can't chooſe but thrive; he will have ſomething to ſhow for his gains, when others have nothing, When the rich ones of the world ſhall be begging a drop of water, he is at the fountain. If we ſhould take a ſurview of that mans eſtate, that is acquainted with God, you muſt lift up your eyes to thoſe everlaſting Hills, you muſt look Eaſt, Weſt, North and South; all this is his, things preſent, and things to come; mount up to the top of *Carmel*, your ſight is too ſhort, you ſee not the hundredth part of his inheritance, all this is nothing, he hath a brave eſtate in another Country; he is rich in Bills and Bonds, when he comes to age, he will have no man know what falls to him; and whence hath he all this wealth, hath he not got every penny of it ſince he was acquainted

quainted with God ? But I ſhall be but brief upon this Head, becauſe I have handled, what might have fallen in here before ; but the world laughs when I ſpeak at this rate, and think that I am much miſtaken ; the godly man rich ! that's ſtrange ! what, rich with ſcarce cloaths to their backs ; rich, and fare ſo hardly ; rich, and poſſeſs nothing ! this is ſtrange wealth. I grant it, it is ſo, for their eſtate is in inviſibles ; it is not he that poſſeſſeth much, but he that wants little, is rich : Will you call nothing riches, but Gold and Silver, and Houſes and Lands ? is Virtue, Grace, Holineſs no riches ? And will you call theſe little becauſe he hath not ſo much trouble and vexation with his eſtate as ſome have ? is Heaven, Glory, the everlaſting enjoyment of God nothing? Is the poſſeſſing that which is more worth then a thouſand worlds, no riches ; If to have all things that are good for them ; If to have more then their hearts can conceive ; If to be filled with all Spiritual plenty, be counted poverty ; let me be thus poor, rather then enjoy the Revenue of all the Princes, and great Ones of the World ? And what do you think of this, you that are worth never a penny ? Are you deſirous to have a great Eſtate ? you that go backward, and get nothing, would be ſet in ſuch away, as that you may be ſure never to break ? Why then, get acquainted with God, and you can't but grow rich.

11. Another glorious effect of acquaintance with God, is, that it makes a man like God, which is the top of the Creatures honour. Company is of an aſſimulating nature. He that before was unholy, and like the Devil ; by converſion to God, and

and converse with him is made holy like God. He that before was cruel, fiery, unmerciful, by his acquaintance with God is made kind, meek, and lovely. He that in his natural state, was a Non-Conformist to the Laws of his maker, when he is well studied in this point, is the stiffest Conformist, he sticks close to the righteous Cannons of the holy God, and will not by his good will turn to the right hand, or to the left. He that was sometimes very unlike God, when he is brought nigh unto him, his countenance is changed, his features are altered, and the lineaments of Gods image appear very lively in his face; and the more he is in Gods company, and the older he grows, the more he grows like him. O how doth such a one shine! what a Majesty, Glory, and Beauty is there in is face! the ofiner he comes to God, the more he is taken with his Excellency, the more he labours to imitate him. He studies what God is; and as far as his nature is capable of it in this life, he desires to be like him. If God be true and faithful, he dare not be false; but he will hate the way of lying; if God be free and bountiful, he thinks it very ill becomes one of his children to hide his face from his own flesh, to shut up his bowels, to be void of natural affection. If purity be so eminent in God, he knows that impurity would not be commendable in himself. In a word, he desires in every thing to carry himself, as one whose highest ambition is to speak, act, and think as one that would be like God. It was bravely spoken of him (*Sen.* 3. 73.) especially if we consider what the man was, who told his Friend that call'd him to Heaven *in compendium, To get as much happines as this place, this*

soul,

ſoul, while in this body is capable of; that is, to get God for his Friend, to be like him. This is a ſhort cut to glory, a Soul carried to Heaven, or Heaven brought down to the Soul. A full and perfect conformity and likeneſs to God is the very Glory of Glory; and a partial conformity to him upon earth, is his unſpeakable honour in this life. O were men and women better acquainted with God, they would ſparkle and ſhine in their Generation, ſo that their enemies ſhould be forced to ſay, that a Saint is another kind of Creature then a ſenſual ſinner. O why ſtand you then ſo far off from God! come nearer him, and the rays of his glorious Image will reflect from your lives! Be acquainted with him, and you ſhall be like him; keep much in his company by Faith, ſecret Prayer and Meditation, and you will be more Holy, Divine, Spiritual.

12. The laſt effect of this acquaintance with God, which I ſhall name, is this, it will make a man better, far more Excellent in all ſtates, and relations; all his Friends will have the better life with him, the whole Family, it may be where he dwells, will fare the better for him? If he be a Child; he is more dutiful to his Parent then he was, while he was unacquainted with God? If he be a Servant he is more diligent and Faithful then before, he ſerves not with eye ſervice, but doth what he doth with ſingleneſs of heart, as unto the Lord? If he be a maiter, it makes him more exemplary, and makes him to take care that his Houſhold ſhould ſerve the Lord; he had rather his ſervants ſhould make bold with him then God, he is concerned for the honour of God in his Family, as much as his own; if he be a Fa-

ther,

ther, he is careful to bring up his children for God, he is more Spiritual in his affections to them, and desirous to leave them God for their Father, Friend, Portion; as he is a neighbour, he follows peace with all men, and holiness, because he hath seen God? How sweet and amiable doth acquaintance with God make a man! how ready to heal divisions! how full of goodness and charity! how ready to do good unto all, but especially to those that be of the Houshold of Faith! how compassionate, and tender-hearted! how ready to provoke others also to love, and good works: so that the whole Parish lives the quieter, all the poor fare the better, all the neighbourhood, some way or other is beholding to him: one that knows God himself, doth what he can to get others acquainted with God too? how sweetly doth he commend the way of wisdom? with what earnestness, and pitty doth he plead with sinners, and labour to teach transgressors, the paths of God, that sinners may be converted unto him. How doth he set before them the necessity of a change, the danger of their present state, and the excellent qualities of this Friend, that he would bring them acquainted with, telling them, that time was, that he also was as they are, and thought his condition as safe as they do their's: but that it pleased the Lord by his word to open his eyes, and to reveal to him the need that he had of Christ, and to inable him to accept of him, and to prize him above the whole world. In all conditions, and relations, he commends Religion, and shews that godliness, where it is in the power and life of it, is a brave thing, which makes so great an alteration in a man for the better?

better ? If he be ſick, he rejoyceth, and thinks cheerfully of death, the grave and Eternity : and in this ſtate demeans himſelf ſo, that ſtanders-by, can't but be convinced of the reality of inviſibles, and to think ſure there is ſomething more then ordinary in acquaintance with God, which makes men ſo undaunted, and with ſo much gallantry to meet death ; ſure their condition is better then ours, or elſe they could never be ſo joyful at ſuch a time as this is : Then he tells of the uſe of a Chriſt, the benefit of a Redeemer in a dying hour, and how infinitely it is for their intereſt, in Time to provide for Eternity? if he be well, he deſires to improve his health for God, and to ſerve his Maker with the ſtrength of Body, and Soul. If he be poor, he ſhews a pattern of Patience, Meekneſs, Thankfulneſs, and lets the world underſtand that godlineſs with content is great gain ? if he be rich, he deſires to be rich in good works alſo, and to trade with ſuch trifles as Gold and Silver, for rich commodities, as Grace, Peace and Glory : with the things of this world, for the things of another : To lay up for himſelf Treaſure, which neither Moth can corrupt, nor Thieves break through, and ſteal : and to make to himſelf a Friend of the unrighteous Mammon : to be a Faithful ſteward of thoſe Talents that his great Lord and Maſter hath committed to his truſt : he ſhows how great a good it is to be great and good too. This is the man which doth adorn the Goſpel: this is the Chriſtian which doth credit his profeſſion ; this tis to be intimately acquainted with God ! O how uſeful might men and women be in their generations, were they but more in Gods company ? O what

a favour would there be of their Graces in the place where they live? How would poor Creatures that receive good by their holy counsels, and suitable lives, bless God for the day, that ever they were born, and adore that goodness, which brought them near such and such a one, by whose means God hath brought them out of the Vassalage and Captivity of Satan, and by whose help they have got acquainted with a Friend that is more worth to them then a world; for one that hath God for his Friend, can't but desire that others also should have an interest in him; they know how ill it will go with them that know not God, and this makes them to do what they can to bring God and man acquainted; they would make those that are good better, and them that are bad good? if those that he converseth with, or stands related to, were enemies, he lets them know that a Christian can love him dearly, whose sin he hates entirely, and that a child of God can pitty them, that have no pitty at all for him. I might add how oft are a great many wicked ones spared from temporal judgements, for the sakes of the righteous that are amongst them.

III. HEAD OF MOTIVES.

The next Head of *Motives* to enforce this Exhortation, might be taken from the danger of not being acquainted with God. If you could live securely without God, and be in a safe condition, though you still remained a stranger to him, the business then were not so very considerable; if you could find any in Heaven that could do as much

much for you as God can, I ſhould not be ſo earneſt with you to get an intereſt in his favour; if you could by any means poſſible be everlaſtingly happy any other way, if without this Friend get to Heaven, and without his Alliance avoid utter ruine, I ſhould have had the leſs reaſon to uſe ſo much importunity; I might then poſſibly have ſpared my ſelf the trouble of ſpeaking theſe things, and you the trouble of hearing of them. But when I ſee and know that it is as much as their life and ſoule is worth, to ſlight and undervalue the Motions that I am now a making to you in Chriſts ſtead, how can I with any faithfulneſs and love to your ſouls hold my peace? How can I ſtand looking upon men and women that are about to murder their own ſouls, and forbear crying out? How can I endure to ſee poor Creatures running with all the ſpeed they can to that diſmal place, from whence there is no Redemption, and not endeavour to ſtop them? Would you have me ſo cruel to your ſouls; as not to tell that which doth infinitely concern their well-being? for, let me tell you, God will not ſtand neuter, he will be either for you, or againſt you, he is the Lord of Hoſts, and he will fight on one ſide or other. Now ſee to your matters, as the nature of them doth require. What do you think of having a God againſt you? if God be againſt you, who will be for you? *There is no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* The ſafeſt conditions you can be in, while God is your enemy, is ſadly hazzardous; ſuch a one hangs by a twined thread over everlaſting flames; he ſtands upon the brink of that bottomleſs pit, and one ſhove, one ſlip, ſends him going

for

for ever; he ſtands upon a pinacle, which one little blaſt may blow him off, and then where is the man to all Eternity? if he fall thence, there is no riſing again; if he once go into that other world, there is no recovery of him, if one would give a world to bring him back again. I ſay it again, if God be not your Friend, he will be your Enemy: and what do you think of ſuch an Enemy? It is but a word, a look, and they fall. Let me tell you, that except you ſpeedily humble your ſelves, you ſhall find that we do not make the danger greater then it is: according to his fear ſo is his wrath: you may know ſoon enough to your coſt, what the diſpleaſure of a God is, how dreadful his arrows, how ſharp his ſword. Not a man of them ſhall ſcape that will not accept of peace upon his tearms, and that quickly too. O that will be a ſad day, when God ſhall ſay, *Bring them out and ſlay them before my face.* If God be your enemy, who do you think will be your friend? To which of the Saints or Angels will you fly? where will you go for ſhelter againſt the ſtorm of that terrible one? what armour will defend you from the dint of his weapons? what in the world can ſtand that man in any ſtead that hath ſuch an Adverſary? eſpecially when he comes to give his definitive ſentence againſt him for high Treaſon. *Dives* may ſay, Father, and *Abraham*, Son: but what comfort for all that had the miſerable Child from his holy Father? doth he not in ſtead of cooling his tongue with a drop of water, lay more burning coals upon it, & if it be poſſible, make the heat of it greater: *Son, remember that thou in thy life time hadſt thy good things.* Thus *Abraham* by putting him in mind what his condition

was,

was, makes him with the greater ſorrow to feel what it is. The memory of former joys under preſent ſorrows, make them ſting the more. Well then, if you would not hereafter reflect with an aking heart upon your loſt enjoyments, think with a ſerious and thankful heart of the preſent offers, that you may in Eternity reflect with joy upon your ſhort ſorrows in time. If you will not be acquainted with God, you ſhall be acquainted with the Devil, and know whoſe company is beſt by woful experience, If you will not believe his Word, you ſhall feel his Sword. If his kindneſs and goodneſs will not melt you, his power and juſtice ſhall break you; for he that now is ſo patient, will ere long roar like a Lyon, and tear in pieces, and there ſhall be none to deliver; he will break his ſtubborn enemies with a rod of iron, and daſh them in pieces like a potters veſſel. Thoſe that will not know his love, ſhall know ſomething elſe; I will not ſay what, for it is inexpreſſible. But only this remember, It is ſuch a God that you will have to deal with, before whom the mountains quake, and the hills remove out of their places, before whom the great Tyrants, of the world have fallen; and ſhall you ſtand? Where are all thoſe Giants? Where are the inhabitants of the old World? What is become of *Nimrod* that mighty hunter, and all his fellows? Where are all thoſe daring ſinners, that ſcorned to accept of a pardon, mercy and peace, and which had the courage to grapple with omnipotency it ſelf? who got the day? who had the worſt of it at laſt? and art thou ſtronger then they? is thy power greater, thy underſtanding deeper, thy Allyes more conſide-

rable then theirs ? A fly may be too hard for *Pharaoh*; but *Pharaoh* can never be too hard for God. Becauſe judgement is not ſpeedily executed againſt thee, thou thinkeſt therefore it may be it is becauſe God cannot deal with thee, and upon this account thy heart is fully ſet in thee to do wickedly; but know thou, for all this that God will bring thee to judgement. Conſider this, that as far as it ſeems to be now, the winds may riſe, the clouds may gather of a ſudden, the Heavens may be overcaſt in a moment; and what will you do then? when Heaven and Earth ſhall be in a Flame, then you will be ſcraping acquaintance with God, then you will be glad to be owned by him, then you would willingly Chriſt ſhould take notice of you, and ſay, *You bleſſed of my Father*; then you will ſtand at the door and knock, and cry, and pray, and plead, and ſay, *Lord, Lord, have I not been oft at thy houſe? have I not eat at thy table, and taught in thy name in our ſtreets?* and yet thou ſhalt be dimiſſed with this ſhort and ſharp anſwer, *Depart, I know you not.* How do you like ſuch an anſwer as this is? how will you take it when you ſtand begging at the door for one crumb of mercy, one drop of Chriſts bloud, to be ſent away with a bitter ſcorn and denial, or elſe to be anſwered with ſilence? Whereas you were invited to the feaſt as well as thoſe that went in, and you would not hear, though God ſent meſſenger after meſſenger to fetch you, you thought your oxen better company then your God, you took more pleaſure in your dogs, then in the hunting after thoſe nobler things. What do you think of ſuch expoſtulations as theſe? what replies can you make

make to theſe accuſations? ere long you will find theſe things realities; ere long all your friends will be dead and gone, and if they would help you, they cannot; your eſtate will be conſumed. your houſes will all be burnt, all your attendants, except care and fear, will ſhortly forſake you, your Gold and Silver will not ere long be worth a ruſh; and what will you do then? nay, the greateſt friends that you had will become your enemies. Little do you think, as kind as they ſeem to be, what your good fellows, the World, and the Devil will do againſt you; Little do you think how falſe your friends will prove when it comes to that, that they ſee that all is going? then they alſo will help forward your ruine. Thoſe that you durſt have truſted your life with, will accuſe you and help to caſt you. Thoſe which incouraged to ſin, will witneſs againſt for ſin. Your good Fellows, your Confederates in wickedneſs, your dear Friends, that you loved more then God, that you did not ſpare to venture your life and ſoul for. O it will make your heart ake to ſee ſuch come in againſt you, which you thought loved you ſo dearly! O to have a Wife, a Child, a Husband, an old Friend to come before the Judge, and to make known ſuch things as you hoped had been buried for ever. It will make your ears to tingle, to hear one crying out, Lord, if it had not been for him, I had turned and repented; it's long of him that I am in this woful condition; I was reſolved many a time and oft to ſeek after another world, and to provide for my ſoul, but he would not let me alone; when I began to be ſerious, he laughed and jeer'd me, and would never be at quiet till he had made

me as bad as himſelf; he carried me from the Ale-houſe to the Tavern, from thence to a Play-houſe, from a Play-houſe to a Whore-houſe, from thence to the High-way, from thence to the Gaol, from the Gaol to the Gallows, and from thence I came hither; and I may thank him for all this. O how will men look when they ſee the beſt friends that they had, come in thus againſt them! this 'tis to truſt to faithleſs friends; this 'tis to make light of acquaintance with God. Your Gold and Silver will be a witneſs againſt you, and will eat your fleſh as with a canker; your Children, Relations good and bad, will ſpeak bitter things againſt you; your own Family, will curſe you, and ſay, Lord, we never heard any thing of God, except in an Oath from his mouth; we never heard any thing of Religion, except it were in deriſion of it in his Family; and thoſe of us that were a little ſerious, and began to think of our ſouls, he would ſnib and brow-beat, and never give us a kind look till we did as he did; nay, the Devil who now doth ſo much flatter ſinners, and make them believe that he is ſo much their friend, will then ſhew himſelf; he will then be as cruel as he now ſeems kind; he that now tempts to ſin ſo impetuouſly, will hereafter accuſe for ſin violently, and torment for ſin unmercifully. The people of God which weep over ſinners, and pray for them, and wiſh them well with their ſouls, will then ſee juſtice executed upon their neareſt Relations, without the leaſt ſorrow; nay, they alſo will come in againſt them too, and ſay, Lord I told them of this woful day, O Lord thou knoweſt I forewarned them of that which is now come to

paſs,

paſs, I pleaded with them with all the compaſſion that I could, and they ſcorned my pitty, they would not pity themſelves, but made light of that glory which they are going from, and of that Hell that they are going to; and now, O Lord, thou art juſt and righteous, that thou haſt thus judged them. This will be the language of thoſe that are your beſt friends; the people of God they will be your enemies one day, if you will not now mind the making of your peace with God; they muſt and will, be on Gods ſide againſt all the World, they muſt and will take part with their Friend, and clear him when he judges, and juſtifie him when he condemns you. O that you that are now ſtrangers to God, would but conſider of theſe things! O that you would but think what this battel may be, where the combatants are ſo unequal. Stand ſtill O Sun in the valley of *Ajalom*, till the Lord have avenged him of his enemies: Muſter your ſelves. O ye ſtars, and fight in your courſes againſt thoſe miſerable ſinners, that have waged a war againſt their Maker; plant your mighty Cannons, ſhoot down huge Hailſtones, Arrows of fire, and hot Thunderbolts? O how do the wounded fall? how many are the ſlains of the Lord, multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Deciſion, for the day of the Lord is terrible. Behold Gods enemies falling by thouſands, behold the garments rouling in blood, hear the prancing of his terrible ones, the mountains are covered with Horſes and Chariots of fire. Gods Souldiers run from one place to another with their flaming Swords in their hands, Arm'd with the juſtice of God, jealouſie, power and indignation! O the dreadful

ſlaughter that is made. Millions, millions fall, there are not able to ſtand, not one of them can lift up his hand, their hearts fail them, paleneſs and trembling hath ſeized upon the ſtouteſt of them all. The bow of the Lord is ſtrong: from the blood of the ſlain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of the Lord turneth not back, the ſword of the Almighty returns not empty? How do the mighty Ones, fall in the midſt of this battell! A hot battell indeed in which none ſcape? Who is he that cometh from *Edom* with dyed garments from *Boſrah*? This that is glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name. Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat? I have troden the wine-preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me? For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood ſhall be ſprinkled upon my garments, and I will ſtain all my raiment, for the day of Vengeance is in my Heart, and the year of my Redeemed is come. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their ſtrength to the Earth, the hand of the Lord ſhall be known, the power of the mighty *Jehovah* ſhall be felt, and his indignation towards his Enemies, For behold he will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire: For by fire, and by his ſword will he plead with all fleſh: and the ſlain of the Lord ſhall be many, and the Saints ſhall go forth and look upon the Carcaſſes of the men that have tranſgreſſed a-

gainſt

gainſt me: for their worm ſhall not dye, neither ſhall their fire be quenched, and they ſhall be an abhorring unto all fleſh. Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and horrible tempeſt. This ſhall be the portion of their Cup! This 'tis to fight againſt God! This 'tis to defie the Lord of Hoſt! This 'tis to refuſe a peace that would have been ſo unſpeakably advantagious! To ſpeak a little plainer, this is all that ſinners are like to get by their ſtanding it out againſt the tenders of Grace and Mercy. And are you ſtill deſirous to engage in this dreadful war? Will you ſtill bid defiance to the Almighty, and make nothing of ſuch things as you have heard of? Is the loſs of your blood, the loſs of your Soul, your utter undoing for ever, no great matter with you? Well then, go on bold ſinner, Arm thy ſelf *Cap-a-pee*, gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, get thy ſhield and buckler ready, prepare to meet thy God: Go up, O thou valiant Warrior, and let's ſee thy valour, behold thy enemy hath taken the field; go up, and look thy God in the face if thou dareſt; come ſhew thy ſelf a mark for God, and turn not thy back like a coward, venture upon the mouth of the Cannon, ruſh upon the thick boſſes of Gods buckler, if you long to periſh everlaſtingly. You have heard what the war will coſt you, and as you like it now, do. And what do you laugh at all this? well then, go on, but be it upon your peril, your blood be upon your own Soul: As for me I could not have ſaid much more then I have, to diſſwade you from this deſperate enterpriſe; I foreſee what a caſe you will be in, when you are in the heat of the battell, and I deſire to weep in ſecret for thee,

as one that will moſt certainly be undon, if thou doſt not ſpeedily alter thy mind, wherefore my loyns are filled with pain, pangs have taken hold upon me as the pangs of a woman that travelleth, I am bowed down at the thoughts of thy miſery, I am diſmayed at the ſeeing of thy deſtruction. The ſinner ventures for all this! He is marched into the field! Set a watch-man; let him declare what he ſeeth. Who meets that furious wretch? A Lyon, a lyon roareth, he is torn in pieces, and none can ſave him, he is gon, he is gon! he is gon for ever! and who may the mad man thank for all this? Who could help it? He would venture though he was told as much. Well then, ſee whats like to befall the enemies of God: You hear what is like to be the condition of all them that will not be aquainted with God, Firſt, or Laſt, you likewiſe may behold what a caſe you your ſelf ſhall be in ere it be long, except you do ſpeedily repent of your folly, and meet your adverſary in the way, and humble your ſelf before the mighty *Jehovah*; ſpeak quickly? What will you do? Turn, or Burn; Repent, or Dye. Yet you do but hear, you do not feel; but thouſands, and millions feel what the diſpleaſure of God is, what the breach of his Covenant is, and what effects of a war with the Lord of Hoſts is. O be wiſe by their falls, let their deſtruction be your inſtruction, take heed what you do, leſt you be the next that God ſhall deal with as an enemy: As yet God offers to be Friends with you; but whether God will do as much to morrow as he doth to day, I do not know. I tell you but ſo, it's hard putting it to the venture. Remember you had large

proffers

proffers of Grace, and pardon made to you, God hath ſent us to let you know his will and pleaſure, and we demand of you from him to give us your anſwer ſpeedily. And what can't you yet reſolve? Is it ſo difficult a buſineſs to determine what to fix upon? O fooliſh people, and unwiſe? O unſpeakable madneſs! How juſt muſt their condemnation needs be, who are offered ſalvation ſo often, and refuſe it? who are ſo oft told of damnation, and yet run into it? in a word, who might have God for their Friend, and had rather have him for their enemy.

4. The next head of *Motives*, by which I might inforce this duty of acquaintance with God, may be taken from the examples of them which made all the Friends they can to get acquainted with God. Behold a cloud of witneſſes, which do all with one conſent ſpeak high in the commendation of this Friend, that I am perſwading you all that I can to be acquainted with. Are you wiſer then all your neighbours, is the ignorant objection of ſome that would take it very heinouſly, if we ſhould call them fools, when we put them upon a ſerious diligence in purſuit of the beſt things? Why, let me retort this objection upon themſelves, are you wiſer then *Enoch* and *Noah*? have you more underſtanding then *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*? Have you more wit then *David*? Are you wiſer then *Heman*, *Daniel*, and many others of thoſe brave worthies, which were the wonders of the world, the Non-ſuches of their age, and a pattern to future Generations? This was the greateſt piece of their wiſdom to walk with God, this was the beſt of their policy to get ſo potent an Allie; this ſpake them to be men of

a deeper reach, and a larger underſtanding then others, becauſe they made it their buſineſs to get acquainted with God, and thus to make their intereſt as large as Heaven, and their peace and proſperity as ſure as the oath of a God could make it. Do you think that all theſe men were miſtaken? did their wiſdom lie only in a prudent management of their worldly affairs to their beſt advantage? what then, did they mean ſome of them to leave all that they had ſo chearfully upon the command of God? dare you ſay that they prized the favour of God at too high a rate? as for their parts, they thought they could never value ſuch a friend as God too much. What elſe was the meaning of their longing, panting, and breathing after him? Why elſe are they ſo glad of his company, his preſence? How loath were they to do any thing that might be in the leaſt diſpleaſing to him? What bitter moans did they make, if he did but withdraw a while, if he did but a little abſent himſelf from them? how wonderful deſirous were they of enjoying communion with him? how earneſt to live in his houſe for ever? Dare you ſay that there were all fools and mad men for refuſing the embraces of this preſent world, for ſlighting its ſmiles, and undervaluing its greateſt kindneſſes, and chooſing that favour of God, though with the ſcorns and reproaches of the world, rather then to hazard his anger, whoſe wrath burns to the bottom of Hell. Behold, what a glorious company of theſe ſtand upon mount *Zion* with Harps in their hands, with thoſe hundred and forty and four thouſand, and the Lamb with an innumerable multitude of all Nations, People,

and

and Languages. Why all theſe were of the Friends and Acquaintance of God, or elſe they had never had thoſe Crowns, Robes, and Palms in their hands. Now, why ſhould not our ſouls be as dear to us as theirs were to them? Will not Heaven be as good for us as them? is it not as needful for us to get a friend of God, as them? Will not God do as much for us as them, if we will but do as they did, walk with him. The truth of it is, the number of them which are ſaved is but few, in compariſon of the multitudes of them which know not God, and go the broad way; yet for all that, take them abſolutely, they are abundance; ſo many that the Scripture ſaith they are innumerable. Do but read over the Hiſtory of ſome of their Lives, turn over the holy Records, look ſometimes into thoſe Sacred Chronicles, and behold how chearfully they ſerved God, how actively they followed the Lamb whereſoever he goes, through thick and thin. Hear what their language is now they are got home ſafe, now Chriſt hath brought them to glory, and they are at their Friends houſe. What do they talk of? what is their diſcourſe about? do they complain what a ſad journey they had of it through a howling wilderneſs, after they had paſſed the Red Sea, through a thouſand ſorrows and trials? do they ſay that now they are at their journeys end they are weary, and wiſh they had never taken ſo long and tedious a journey? do they not rather ſpeak the quite contrary, and that if it were to go again they would do it with far more ſpeed and chearfulneſs then they did? Liſſen, hark, methinks I hear them from the walls of the *New Jeruſalem*, crying out, Come away

away, come away, fall on bravely, follow your buſineſs gallantly but a little while longer, and the City is your own; fetch your ſcaling ladders, run up apace, mount the rampiers, fear nothing though the Devil play his Artillery upon them, yet it is but powder, he ſhall never give you a mortal wound; reſiſt him and he will flee, and the field is yours; the Spoil, the Crown, the Honour will pay for your pains, bloud, and danger. Fall on brave ſouls, fall on; the valianter you be, the more ſafe you are. Methinks I hear thoſe noble Saints encouraging of you to get acquaintance with God, and ſaying to you that are yet afar off, come near, Come away poor ſouls, come away, what do you mean thus to delay? O little do you think what a friend we now find of God; it was but a little, a very little that was told us of the excellency of Chriſt, and the glories of this place, to what we experience; It was no falſe report that we heard when we was upon earth, of the happineſs of Heaven: O here's a prize worth the running for; a Kingdom, a Crown worth the fighting for, an Eſtate worth the looking after. We have not now our ſtint; we are not dieted with thoſe Spiritual Dainties, we have not now and then a ſip, a draught, a bit in a corner, but we are at the fountain, we are daily feaſted with infinite pleaſures, our hearts are full, brim full, they run over, we ſwim in an ocean of ſpiritual enjoyments; theſe things are beyond your capacity now to underſtand. Were we to live upon earth again, and did we know what we do now know, we ſhould ever pine with our earneſt longing for God, the living God, to be in his immediate preſence, and to be at that

angelical work of praiſing, ſerving, and loving him for ever. Wherefore brethren, let us encourage one another, *Come let us go up to the houſe of the Lord; his dwelling is in* Salem, *his palace is upon mount* Zion. Why ſhould not we go on as merrily in the paths of Wiſdom, as the wicked in the road of Hell? How do the Devils Champions encourage and hearten one another up? How do they laugh, ſing and roar, as if their life were the only life; for ſhame let's tell them they lye in their teeth. Who hath the beſt company, they or we? the Patriarchs and Prophets, the Apoſtles and thouſands of Martyrs are gone ſinging before ſome of our dear Relations, Fathers, Brethren and Siſters are newly welcomed by Chriſt to his Fathers houſe; and they are bleſſing that rich mercy that hath conducted them to ſuch a place, to ſuch a friend! we have many thouſands of Saints Militant that are going along with us as faſt as they can, and God himſelf will bear us company, and why do we yet linger? O that we were upon the wing! O that our ſouls were like the Chariots of *Aminadab*! O that the Lord would ſtrengthen poor ſhort-winded Creatures? O that we could run and not be weary, and walk and not faint! O that we might have now and then a hearty meal, and that in the ſtrength of them we could travel to the mount of God! O that that acquaintance might now be happily begun, which may never have an end! O that God would viſit us oft, and get into our hearts? O that he that gave thoſe Worthies in former times ſo much grace, would pour out of the ſame grace in abundance upon our ſouls! O that he would ſhed abroad his love in our hearts! O that

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we could maintain a conſtant intercourſe with him here, till we come to a perfect enjoyment of him in glory hereafter! O that we may ſee thy face, thy bleſſed face by faith! O that thou wouldeſt cauſe thy glory to paſs before us! O that thy marvellous loving kindneſs might be made known to a company of poor Creatures of us, whoſe deſire is to fear thee, who would fain love thee with the ſtrength of our ſouls! O bleſſed are they that love thee, that are beloved by thee!.

5. I might alſo inſiſt upon another Head of *Motives*, which is named in the Text, which is this, *Acquaint now thy ſelf with him, and thou ſhalt be at peace*. Though there be nothing but War on every ſide, you ſhall have peace. This peace of God, whatſoever you may think of it, is unſpeakably advantagious; the benefits that would accrue to a ſoul upon this peace are infinite; It is a *peace that paſſeth all underſtanding*. When we have this peace concluded, we may drive a brave Trade without deſturbance for the richeſt Commodities. If we were thus acquainted with God, we ſhall have ſuch a peace as that we may laugh at the ſhaking of the ſpear, and not be much diſturbed when we hear of dreadfull things abroad in the World. He that is acquainted with God may ſafely venture up and down, he hath Gods paſs, a ſtrong man of war for his convoy, he hath ſuch powerful allies that he need not fear; as long as he is at peace with God, he is ſure not to be quite overcome by man. He is at peace with himſelf, when the Aire etchoes with Drums and Trumpets, and the roaring of Guns, a muſick that pleaſeth the

Devils

Devils Ear; He may ſtill rejoyce, becauſe he hath a bird within, which ſings ſweetly; there is a harmony between his will and Gods, a harmony between his heart and his mouth. This is no ſuch contemptable thing, and if you knew what a wounded Spirit, a fire in the boſom is, you would ſay ſo. This peace that ſuch a one hath, is a wel-grounded peace; not ſuch a one as is built upon ignorance, and hardneſs of heart; but ſuch a peace as reſults from the ſence of the pardon of ſin, and reconciliation with God, through the blood of Chriſt; That blood of Chriſt hath waſhed his conſcience from dead works. Sins he had, and hath, but ſome of them he ſees lying dead like the Egyptians upon the ſhore, others ſtriving for life, with a deaths wound upon them; and though he have enemies ſtill living, yet they are ſuch as ſhall never have the abſolute dominion over him: as long as the great quarrel between him and God is at an end, all is well enough, the Law hath nothing againſt him, all his accuſers are ſilenced; Chriſt hath fulfilled and ſatisfied the Law for him; The great Creator hath given a full and general acquittance, all debts are diſcharged for him, and therefore the man hath little reaſon to trouble his head much with cares and fears; now he may go up and down any where, and not fear the Serjeant, his noble ſurety hath paid that vaſt debt, he hath laid down the ten thouſand Talents upon the Nail, ſo that the man is at peace with God, he is alſo at peace with all the Creatures in the world, from the glorious Angels that are in Heaven, to the meaneſt inſect or plant; they are ſo far from doing him any real harm, that they all are ſervants

vants to the Friends of God, they all ſtand ready to oppoſe their Enemies; and thoſe of them that are mortal are ready to lay down their lives for one that ſtands thus related to God. For when any enters into Covenant with God, God alſo makes a Covenant for them with the beaſts of the field. Great peace have they that love Gods law, and nothing ſhall offend them; ſuch a one is at peace with death and the grave. We read of ſome profane Monſters that made a Covenant with death, and were at an agreement with Hell: but this Covenant will ſoon be broken, becauſe he that hath the keys of death and Hell, the power of life and death, never ſubſcribed to the Articles of their agreement. But now the godly man hath a Friend that hath made a Covenant for him, a firm Covenant with death, and Hell, ſo that none of them ſhall ever do him the leaſt wrong. As for death, Chriſt hath took out it's ſting; as for the grave, Chriſt hath ſpiced, and ſeaſon'd it, it's Power is maſter'd, it's Terribleneſs is taken away! it's now no priſon, Chriſt hath opened the doors of it, and now it is but a Chamber of repoſe, a bed to reſt in; and he that hath already opened this door, when it was bolted, barr'd and double-locked, can and will ere long open it again, and awaken his from their ſleep; and is this inconſiderable? Is not ſuch a peace as this is, deſireable? Who that is well in his wits, would not be glad to be in ſo ſecure a condition as this peace will put him in? And who are like to have the benefit of this peace, but the Friends of God! O therefore if you value your own peace, if you would be undisturbed from ſtorms without, & Heart-quakes within;

within: If you would have all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, at peace with you: If you would have Death unſtung, and the Grave a Chamber, and not a Priſon, why then, get acquainted with God, and you ſhall be at peace.

6. The next head of *Motives*, I might take from theſe words, *Thereby good ſhall come unto you. Acquaint your ſelf with him, and be at peace, and thereby good ſhall come unto you.* But I ſhall here be but brief. Think of what you will that is good for you, and if you are acquainted with God, you ſhall have it for asking for; or that which is far better than that which you deſire: For the Lord God is a Sun, & a Shield, he will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them which walk uprightly; that is, from thoſe that are acquainted with him. All his ways are mercy and truth, to ſuch as be in covenant with him, and all ſhall work together for good, to them that love him. Inlarge thy deſires as wide as the Heavens, requeſt what you will, ask never ſo much, and you ſhall have it; And what would you have more? If it be the good of profit that you deſire; What greater gain than Godlineſs? Who can give ſuch rewards to his ſervants as God? Who will give greater portions to his children than this Father? Who is like to thrive better than he, who hath ſuch a vaſt ſtock, ſuch a great Trade, ſuch quick and great returns, and above all ſuch a Partner? O that thoſe that are all for profit and gain, that cry out, what advantage ſhall it be to me, if I ſerve God? and what profit to me, if I am acquainted with him? O that ſuch would

but do that which will be moſt for their profit, I would deſire no more of them than this. O that they would but try what a gainful Trade Religion in it's power is! The greateſt Merchants that ever walked the Exchange, if they be not acquainted with God, and have not Chriſt for their Factor, are but Pedlars to the Saint. One that is acquainted with God, gets more in one Hour, in one Prayer, at one Sermon, in one Meditation, then all the rich men of the world are worth, put all their eſtates together: One receives his peace, the other his pounds; the one hath by way of return a great deal of troubleſome Lumber, the other his Box of precious Pearls, and a Jewel of an infinite value. O little doth the laborious worldling think what poor and ſmall gains his are, when he gets moſt, to what this Spiritual Merchant gets; he would not ſell what he gets ſometimes in one morning, for all the riches of both the *Indies*. He trades in ſuch Commodities which will not ſuffer dammage upon the Sea; his Veſſel is light and ſtrong, the Maſter of it never made a looſing voyage. All his wares are unvaluable; and though his ſhip be in many a dreadful ſtorm, though ſometimes ſhe be becalm'd, though it be long before ſhe return, yet as long as ſhe hath ſuch Proviſions within, ſuch a Pilot, ſuch Anchors, ſhe can't miſcarry, ſhe will come into the Harbour Richly Laden: The world will not believe this, but I am ſure there is never a man breathing, but will ſooner ſay, that no gain is like the gain of Chriſt and Glory. One return from Heaven, one anſwer of Prayer, one ſmile from God, one look of love, the head of one *Goliah*, the death of one Sin, one

Soul

Soul brought home to Christ, one drooping soul comforted, is a greater mercy (for all the ignorant world make nothing of such things as these) than to be invested with the greatest Honours, than to be possessed of all the Riches, than to enjoy all the Pleasures that the whole world can afford. But O, were mens eyes opened, were men within sight of those devouring Flames, then they would believe that a Christ were worth the having; Grace a Pearl that cannot be overvalued, and that no Trade was comparable to a Spiritual Merchant, no Art like that, by which one may turn every thing into Gold. But if it be the good of pleasure you look more after; can there be greater pleasures than those which are in the presence of God? Can there be any greater pleasures, than to rejoyce in God, and to be made welcome by him, than to drink Flagons of that excellent Liquour, which is better than wine? Can there be better Musick, than to hear so many Millions of sweet Voyces singing *Halelujahs*! O there's a Consort! There's Melody indeed! If you desire that other good, the good of Honesty, a rare accomplishment, perfection of Grace, purity of Soul; wherewithal shall a young man choose his ways, but by taking heed thereto, according to his word. Well then, lay all these *Motives* together, and let's see whether they will any whit prevail. If the nature of the person with whom I would fain have you acquainted, if all these admirable qualities that are in him (if I may so call them) may signifie any thing, if all those glorious effects of acquaintance with God, weigh any thing with you, one would think by this time you should be well resolved. If the

danger of not being acquainted with God, may make you afraid of ſtanding it out; if good or evil, if peace or war, if life or death, If all this be as much as nothing, what then is ſomething? If the frequent pleading of mercy, if the blood of Chriſt have any voice, if the expoſtulations of his Embaſſadors may be heard, Why ſhould you not then be perſwaded? If all this will not move you, what can we ſay more? If we could ſhew you Heaven, and the glories of another world, could we let you ſee the Face of Chriſt, could we any way in the world reach you hearts, and perſwade you by any means to mind the things of Eternal peace, we would do it with all our hearts. If we were ſure to get you with us, and to bring you acquainted with God, we could willingly come begging on our bare knees to you, and beſeech you to be reconciled to God. We ſee that diſmal day a coming, and are grieved to think, what a ſad taking you will be in then; we know the caſe will then be altered with them, which will not be perſwaded to be reconciled to God. O what a woful condition will they be in, which have heard or read theſe Sermons, and yet for all that, would not mind the looking after acquaintance with God! How will ſuch wiſh that they had never been born, or that they had their being in ſome of the dark ſavage corners of the world, where they might never have heard of the Doctrine of Reconciliation, being acquainted with God, and union with Chriſt, peace with their offended Maker, rather than having heard of theſe things to make light of them! O to hear of ſuch a friend, and to have him for an enemy; to hear of Peace, and to chooſe

War,

War; to hear of Heaven, and go to Hell, this is ſad indeed. It would have been far better for ſuch, that they had never known the ways of God, than after they have known them, to go in the ways of Folly. O that men and women had but ſuch ſerious thoughts of theſe things as they will have ere long! O that they would but believe Heaven, and Hell, and Eternity to be ſuch Realities as ſhortly they will! O that mens hearts were but affected with things, as they will be when their ſouls are juſt a going, or a little after they are in another world! But O the miſerable condition of the world! O the lamentable ſtate of Profeſſors, that make no more of the favour of diſpleaſure of God! Nay, may I not ſay, O the folly of the Children of God themſelves, that are no more in Gods Company, when they know they may be ſo welcome, when they have taſted ſo oft of his kindneſs, when they were made ſo much of the laſt time that they gave him a viſit. Are not men in a deep ſleep, that they do not hear? Are they not blind, that they do not ſee? Are they not ignorant, fooliſh, and mad, that they do not underſtand their intereſt any better? It is not without good reaſon, that the Spirit of God doth ſo often cry out upon ſinners for their folly; the Scripture ſaith not in vain, *That there is none that hath underſtanding, no not one*. No wonder that they which have but half a cure ſee men like trees, that thoſe which never had a through work, do not prize Chriſt. O but that thoſe which have been brought nigh by Grace, who were ſometimes afar off, that ſuch ſhould be ſo much ſtrangers; for thoſe that have met with ſuch kind entertainment at his houſe, for

theſe to keep off ſo, to come ſo ſeldom, for them which have fed ſo high at the Kings Table, to fall to their Trafh, their Husks, this is a ſhame indeed; as if the Devil kept a better houſe than God. Chriſtians, doth God deſerve this at your hands? How unkindly do you think he takes this from you? What will the world ſay? Look how his own acquaintance deſpiſe him? How will the Devil inſult? O how do the hearts of your fellow Chriſtians ake, to ſee how ſtrange your carriage is? How do they tremble to think, what if that fine Houſe be built upon the Sand? Chriſtians, you which ſeldom or complementally viſit God, bethink your ſelves well what you do, when you begin to be cold in your affections to this Friend; remember from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your firſt works; remember what entertainment you have ſometimes had at Gods Houſe; forget not all his Kindneſſes; of all the Creatures in the world, you have no cauſe to carry your ſelves ſo towards God. I tell you again, the World ſtands by, and looks on, to ſee what there is in you more than in others; they mark your lives more than you are aware of, it may be: Wherefore look to your ſelves, take heed how you carry your ſelves before them. O why ſhould they ſee your faces pale, when you may feed ſo highly? O ſhew them by your countenance, that you feed upon wholſome food! O let your breath ſmell ſweet, let your diſcourſe be more ſavoury of the things of God! Labour to maintain a ſweet, conſtant, unintermitted intercourſe

tercourſe with God, to walk with him. O little do you think what you looſe by your coming ſo ſeldom to this Friend. I appeal to your own experience; was not that diſh you eat laſt at his Table ſweet? And what do you think that God doth not ſtill keep as good a Houſe as he did? Do you believe that he hath ſpent all his beſt Wines? Can that Fountain ever be emptied? Is there not Bread and good Chear enough in your Fathers houſe? Believe it, God hath other kind of Entertainment, richer Chear, better Fare ſtill to make you welcome with, if you would not be ſo ſtrange, if you will but come oftener to him. As for Chriſtians, methinks I need not uſe ſo many words to perſwade you, methinks you that know how ſweet his company is, ſhould deſire to be never out of it. Chriſtians, I tell you plainly, if you ever expect true peace in your life, and true joy and comfort at death, it's your only way to keep cloſe to God, viſit him oft by ſecret Prayer and other kind of Duties, and then you ſhall ever and anon meet with that which will ſweeten your greateſt diligence, and abundantly make amends for your pains. Knock at his door, ask for him, and reſolve to ſtay till he come; though he come not at the firſt, ſecond, or third knocking, yet I am ſure he is within, and will come at laſt, if you will but wait; and when you have once again met with him, O let him not go, but tell him ſeriouſly that you can't bear his abſence, he ſhall be your God and Friend living and dying, death it ſelf ſhall not part you. Go alſo and tell your

Friends, you have found him whom your soul loves, that you have met with Jesus, and see if you can get them to come out and see him, bid them to taste and see how good the Lord is; commend him all you can to your poor Christ-less Friends. But you are not the persons that I intended to speak to, only thus a little by the by, that I may a little warm my own heart and yours, in this great duty of maintaining an intimate close converse and acquaintance with God. But my business is to go out into the High ways and Hedges, and to invite poor wandring strangers that have nothing to live upon themselves, and that do not know what a noble open house God keeps, that never tasted of his kindness in Christ, to come to this Royal Feast, and to Eat their fill of such food as they can never eat too much of, never be surfeited with. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men. O ye simple ones, understand wisdom, and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart,* Prov. 8. 4, 5. *Hear O ye deaf, and see O blind: let the dead hear the voice of God, and live.* Then hear what I have been speaking of: I have almost done my message, consider well of these things, as you tender the displeasure of God, as you value your Souls, be serious; remember what it is that I have been discourling to you about, Read it over again, and study on it; Read and Pray, Pray and Read, and turn this exhortation into Prayer; take with you words, and say: O that this might be the Sermon that might bring me acquainted with God! O that this might be the man that might bring me to some knowledg of Christ! O that this might be the happy day wherein a Match

may

may be concluded between my soul, and the precious Jesus! But alas, alas, where are the hearts that are thus smitten? Where are the Souls that are any white taken with this infinite Beauty? How few have any real love or good-will for Christ? O who hath believed our report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Though I and many hundreds more, have been pleading thus with sinners; though some of the Embassadors of peace weep bitterly, that their message is no more kindly entertained, though their publick Preaching be followed with private Prayers and secret Groans; though they expostulate the case with poor refractory Creatures, with all the earnestness that they can for their lives, though we use the most powerful arguments that we can, and deliver them with all the vehemency, seriousness and compassion that we can for our Souls; Yet how are the greatest part of our hearers unconcerned? Is not a great part of our Auditory as stupid and senceless, as the very stones they tread on? The more is our sorrow, we fear as to the most of them that hear us, what we speak, is lost. It may be they may be a little affected just at the hearing, or for an hour or two; but O that these truths might have a lively, and abiding impression on mens hearts! I fear, O that they were causeless fears! I fear that most of you that have heard of these things will go away, and quickly forget what weighty things you have heard; perhaps some of you may say, the man was very earnest, and some of his Expressions were piercing. O Friends, I hope it is not your commendation that I desire? O that I may with a single heart, respect Gods glory! I

say

ſay again. I would not be pleaſed with your praiſe, nor would I fear your diſpraiſe; it's your Souls I want, and may but I manage my great work in this ſucceſsfully, and ſee you acquainted with God, before I leave you for ever, I hope I ſhould be contented to be trod in the dirt. O that my heart may not deceive me! O that my compaſſion to your ſouls were greater, a thouſand times greater! O that I could never ſpeak to you of ſuch things as theſe without tears. I muſt again, and again, profeſs I am aſhamed of my heart, that it is no more ſenſible of theſe weighty affairs! But O mighty and glorious God, if thou pleaſeſt, thou canſt out of the mouth of a Babe and Suckling, ordain ſtrength! O that thou wouldeſt make the worm *Jacob* to threſh Mountains! O that thou wouldeſt make me of the moſt unworthy and weakeſt inſtrument, in that honourable Service of bringing home ſome Souls to thy ſelf. O if but any one Soul, if but one Soul that was eſtranged from God, might by theſe lines be brought acquainted with him, if I might prevail with any other ſtubborn Enemy to lay down his weapons, and be Friends with him, I ſhould think my pains well beſtowed, though (if that will make you to regard it ever the more) this work hath coſt me many an hours ſtudy, and it hath been interrupted with many bodily diſtempers, groans and ſorrows, fears and ſighs. Yet if after all my travel I may hear of any Children born of God; if I may meet but one ſoul the better for it, by it brought to Glory, I ſhall have abundant cauſe to bleſſe my God, and to rejoyce that my labour hath not been in vain in the Lord. But if I might have more

more, I ſhould have more cauſe to adore infinite Goodneſs, and rich Grace! O my dear Friends! O precious and immortal Souls! What ſhall I ſay to you? What ſhall I do for you? O did you but know how hardly I fetch my breath at this time, did you but ſee what a crazy Creature he is that writes to you; did you but know how faint he hath been ſometimes in ſpeaking to you, you would go nigh to pitty him. O pitty your ſelves! O pitty your own Souls, that ere long muſt be turned naked out of your Bodies, and hear the expoſtulations of a dying man that would gladly live with you in everlaſting glory, and meet you all among the Friends of the Bridegroom, that I may ſee you among the Sons of God, in your great meeting, when the Father ſhall ſend his Servants the Angels to fetch all his children home to his own houſe. O pitty your Souls, & let not all my pains be loſt, trample not under your feet the blood of the Covenant, neither count it a common thing, remember that the ſlighting of Chriſt is a dangerous thing, the loſs of his favour, and the loſs of your ſoul, muſt go together? O how ſhall I leave you? How ſhall I part with you, ſhall I go before my work is done? What ſhall I ſay more? What arguments ſhall I further make uſe of? O that I knew what to ſay, that I might prevail! And are you ſtill reſolved to put me off with frivolous excuſes? Can you put off your conſciences thus? Are you ſtill contented to be Aliens and Strangers? If you are, know this, that I muſt leave theſe lines to bear witneſs againſt you; Remember this, that you were told of theſe things again and again. Thoſe that can forget Sermons here,

here, ſhall remember them hereafter; if you be not the better for this diſcourſe, you will curſe the day that ever you heard it; it will be a cutting reflection, when another day you ſhall ſay to your own Soul, at ſuch a time, ſuch a one did beſeech me in Chriſts ſtead to be reconciled to God, and I would not: Curſed man that I was! I made nothing of all the offers of Grace and Mercy, I made little account of theſe intollerable Torments which now make me to gnaſh my teeth. Hear, O unhappy Creature, that art yet alive, Be not ye paſt hope! O that thou mayeſt ſee thy ſad ſtate before it be quite paſt remedy! O let me take up a lamentation for thee, as one whoſe condition is beyond expreſſion deplorable! O that I could ſpeak as affectionately to you as one did lately, who ſpent his ſtrength and life amongſt you all, *viz.* That I can neither eat nor drink, nor ſleep quietly, whilſt I think of the danger that precious Souls run every moment, while they are unacquainted with God! O that mine eyes were waters, and my head a fountain of Tears, that I might weep day and night for poor Chriſt-leſs Creatures, that laugh and are as cheerful as if no danger were near them, whereas that diſmal day approaches apace, wherein they muſt bid an everlaſting farewel to all their pleaſures, and lie down for ever under the ſcalding wrath of an angry God! O ſtand aſtoniſhed O Heavens, and wonder O Earth! Here's a man that had rather be a Beaſt than a man, a Devil than a Saint, that prefers Hell before Heaven, that loves Death and hates Life; Here's a man that makes nothing of going to Hell, Damnation is a thing that he jeſts with; 'tis but

damning,

damning, he ſaith: But damning! Is that ſo light a thing, a thing to be laughed at? Well, if that damning be nothing, never complain of it, when you feel it: If it be nothing, never groan nor bite your tongue, nor gnaſh your teeth for it: If Heaven, and your Soul, the favour of God, eternal happineſs, be ſuch ſmall matters, never complain for the loſs of them. Well then, belike you are pleaſed very well with your choice, and you do chooſe rather to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin, for a moment, than the pleaſures of Holineſs, which laſt for ever. There ſtands a ſinner that hears all this, and frets and foameth at the hearing of it; it's a torture to his Soul to be within the ſound of ſuch Truths? Why, act like one in his wits: If the hearing of Hell and damnation be ſo troubleſome, what will the feeling of it be thinkeſt thou? But that I may, if poſſible, prevail, I ſhall leave a few ſerious queſtions with you, which I charge you in the preſence of God, ſeriouſly to conſider of, and to give a wiſe anſwer to theſe following Queſtions.

Queſt. 1. Are thoſe things which you have heard, true, or are they not? Doth not the Scriptures ſpeak the ſame things which I do? Dare you ſay that the word of Truth is Falſe? Do but open the Bible, dip where you will, what is that you read there? Is it not ſomething that hath a tendency to what I have been teaching of? O that you would but give your ſelves the trouble of ſearching the Scriptures, to ſee whether theſe things are ſo. To what purpoſe do you think ſhould we ſpend our breath? To what purpoſe ſhould we follow you with ſuch exhortations, if we had not ſome grounds for what

we

we ſay? If there be no ſuch thing in the word of God, why then do you not ſay ſo? Why, do you not ſhew us it, if there be ſuch a place that ſaith; there is no need of repentance, that mans condition is ſafe enough already, and that he may do well enough, though he be never reconciled to God? Do you think that we take delight in vexing men and women? Do you conceive that it pleaſeth us to diſpleaſe you, and to get your hatred? Do you not believe that a great many of us, if it might conſiſt with Gods honour, and your welfare, had not far rather be excuſed? Can any man imagine that ſo many thouſands of Prophets, Apoſtles, and Miniſters, in ſuch diſtant ages, and in ſuch diſtant places, ſhould all agree in this, to impoſe a falſity upon the world? Would any man be ſo mad as to invent ſuch things as theſe, which are ſo contrary to mens diſpoſitions, if he had not abundant warrant from God himſelf? Is it poſſible that men ſhould make ſuch complaint, and ſhed ſo many tears, and be in ſuch agonies about theſe things, if there were nothing at all in them? Are all the experiences of ſo many thouſands of Saints, but meer fancies? Speak Chriſtian, ſpeak, What do you ſay to this? Are all thy joys, thy anſwers of Prayers, thoſe ſweet diſhes that thou haſt ſometimes fed upon, but dreams? Doth not thy very blood ſtir in thee, at the very putting ſuch a queſtion to thee? Canſt thou not ſay, that thou haſt ſeen, that thou haſt felt, and that thou haſt known undoubtedly, that Spiritual things are realities, the greateſt realities in the world, and that thou haſt been as much affected with them as ever thou wert with the things of ſenſe? Let me, the

meaneſt

meaneſt of ten thouſand, tell the ſtiffeſt Athieſt in the world, that I have ſeen theſe things ſo realized, that I ſhall ſooner believe that I am turned to a ſtone, or am dead, then believe that Spirituals are nullities and fancies. I am confident if there be any credit to be given to both eyes, and ears, then theſe things are true; and had you ſeen but what I have ſeen in dying Saints, and heard what I have heard, you would eaſily have been convinced, that there is ſomething in communion with God, ſomething in ſpiritual Joys. I am ſure, if there be any truth in the Scriptures, if the word of God be true, if Chriſt and the Apoſtles were not all miſtaken, then theſe things are true. If I ſhould tell you a buſineſs that did concern your Houſe, or your Children, or Body, or any worldly thing whatever, upon my own perſonal knowledg, would you not readily aſſent to what I ſay? I am perſwaded you would be far from ſuſpecting the truth of what I affirmed; I am ready to think, that there is none of you all that think that I dare tell you that which is falſe. O then, Why will you not believe me in a buſineſs of far greater conſequence? And if you ask me to what purpoſe do I ſpend ſo much time for nothing? What need I ſpeak at this rate? What will I make Infidels of you all? What do I think that you are ſuch Atheiſts, as not to believe that the word of God is true? Well then, you your ſelves are witneſſes that the word of God is true, and that you do believe all that is contained in it, and by rational inferences deduced from it: I ſhall therefore take it for granted, that you give your aſſent to theſe things, if you be Chriſtians in profeſſion, your very Name ſpeaks as much;

much. Now my next Queſtion ſhall be this.

Queſt. 2. Are theſe things of weight and importance, or are they not? You hear that they are matters that concern your eternal life or death, Soul affairs; and are not theſe matters of the greateſt conſequence? If acquaintance with God, the happineſs or miſery of a Soul, your making or undoing for ever, be inconſiderable things, What then are great things? Is it a matter of greater importance, to loſe the ſight of a laſcivious Play? Is it an affair of greater weight to have the frowns of a wanton miſtriſs, or the frown of a God? You ſaid even now, that the word of God was true, if you will ſtand to that, I deſire no more; How is it written? Read a verſe or two, turn to Matthew 5. 20. *Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you ſhall in no caſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:* And John 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.* And God will pour out his wrath upon the Heathen, and upon the Families that call not upon his Name. Doth not the Scripture ſay, that is the one thing neceſſary? Are not theſe things called by the Lord Chriſt, the weightier things? *Mat.* 23. 23. I hope you will not ſay, that God is miſtaken, and that the Scripture ſpeaks more of theſe matters than needs: What are you gone from your word ſo ſoon; did you not ſay that the word of God was true, and are you now of another mind, becauſe you find that it requires more ſtrictneſs, you are willing to ſubmit to? But are you aſhamed of that, and are you convinced of this alſo, that the Doctrine of recon-

Reconciliation, Acquaintance, and Peace with God, are affairs of the higheſt importance in the world? And do you indeed believe this? and, will you ſtand to it? well then, my next Queſtion ſhall be this.

Queſt. 3. What do you mean then to mind ſuch things as you acknowledge to be moſt unqueſtionably true, and of the greateſt conſequence, with ſo much indifferency and coldneſs? what reaſon have you then for your ſtrange neglect in your proſecuting of them? what, ſay they are the greateſt things in the world, and will you ſay they are leaſt to be looked after? Is it any Prudence and Wiſdom to be very ſerious about trifles, and to trifle about the moſt ſerious things? Are Heaven, the love of God, and the like, by your own confeſſion the moſt weighty, and will you make light of them? O folly and Hyprocriſie! *Out of thy own mouth thou ſhalt be condemned.* Doſt know that Heaven and Hell are before you? doſt thou know that the one is unſpeakably glorious, and the other unſpeakably dreadful? and yet for all this doſt thou ſtand demurring which of theſe thou ſhouldeſt chooſe? and dareſt thou for all this venture on in a way which leads to the region of Eternal Darkneſs? and though thoſe that know the way better then you, and ſee you ride on ſo haſtily and merrily, call after you with earneſtneſs, yet doſt thou ſtill turn thy back upon them? Conſider whether you act in theſe affairs, like one that is well in his wits. Is God the beſt friend in the world, and yet his kindneſs leaſt to be regarded? Man, what haſt thou to ſay for thy ſelf? O What bruits, and how irrational are men in their ſpiritual matters! how

do they contradict themselves? how do they say one thing, and do the quite contrary! O let me in a word or two renew my Expostulation with them which are loath to be accounted fools! What reason hast thou to undervalue the favour of God so as you do? what reason have you thus foolishly to cast away your selves, and to slight acquaintance with your Maker? Let me plead with you in the language of a Reverend Divine (*R. B.*) of our own. Look up your best and strongest Reasons; and if you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you'l marvel at it: but this is a thing that a man may have reason for, as Bishop *Cranmer* had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to Popery. If you see a man cut off a Leg or an Arm, it's a sad sight, but this is a thing that a man may have good reason for, as many a man doth it to save his life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with Strappado's and Racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered: this is a hard case to flesh and bloud, but this a man may have good reason for, as you see in *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35, 36. and as many an hundred Martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, for a man to run into the fire of Hell when he is told of it, and intreated to turn that he might be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in it, that is reason indeed, to justifie or excuse it. For Heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour that we bestow for it; but nothing can pay for the loss of Heaven. Read on in Mr. *R B's. Call to the Unconverted*, pag. 169. Do you still believe the Word of God

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to be true, and the things contained in it to be the moſt weighty, and yet will you ſtill paſs them over, as if there were nothing at all in them?

Queſt. 4. My next Queſtion that I ſhall propound to you, and deſire your ſerious and ſpeedy anſwer to, is this, Do you believe that you can find a better friend then God? can you mend your ſelf any where elſe? is there in Heaven or Earth any that can do as much for you as God can? is there any one that can take you off when you come to be accuſed for High Treaſon againſt the King of Heaven, and to be arraigned before that juſt Judge? have you got that which will quit your coſt in getting of it, and countervail the loſs of a Soul? what is it that ſtill hath an intereſt in your heart, that is thought to be an equal competitor with God for your deareſt love? If it be indeed that which will ſhield you from the arreſts of Death, and the wrath of the Almighty; if it be that which can ſhelter you from the ſtorm of his diſpleaſure; if it be that which will do you as much good as Heaven, and make you as happy as God can; why then I have little to ſay; make your beſt of it. But conſider well what you do firſt, be ſure that you be not miſtaken, have not many thought as you think, and have found their miſtake when it was too late?

Queſt. 5. Do you think that this world will laſt always with you? do you not believe that ere long you muſt die, and your ſoul appear before God, and by him be ſentenced to its everlaſting ſtate? where is all the glory of thoſe great Monarchs which deſpiſed God, and oppreſſed his people? what is become of all their pomp? which

of them that flouriſhed three thouſand years ago ſtand alive now in glory? and are you better then they? ſhall the worms which have made a prey of them, ſpare you? is Death more favourable now a days, then he was before? is not the world ſtill as it was, but vanity? is not all fleſh ſtill but graſs, and the beauty of it as a flower that is cut down and withereth ſuddenly? Well then, this being granted, that nothing is more certain then Death, and that it is appointed for all men once to die; would you not then be glad of ſomething that will ſtand you inſtead after death, a Friend in another world? why then do you not ſpeedily get acquainted with him who alone can befriend you in that dreadful hour?

Queſt. 6. What do you think will become of you, if after all this you go on in your old ways? what will become of you do you think if you ſhould die without the knowledge of God? what hopes hath you of life in peace, if you bid defiance to the Lord of life, and contemn the Prince of peace? how ſhall you eſcape if you neglect ſo great ſalvation? what do you think that thoſe which did once as you do now, ſlight Chriſt, and never look after Reconciliation with God, are now a doing in another world? what would you do in this caſe? ſhould one come to you either out of Heaven, or out of Hell, how wonderfully do you think you ſhould be affected with the Narration which they would give you of the affairs of the inviſible world? why then will you not now be affected with what we ſay? for aſſure your ſelves, whatever you may think, our teſtimony is as true, and hath a better foundation of credit, then if one ſhould tell you he came

came from the dead, and ſpeak to you of theſe things.

*Queſt.*7. Another Queſtion I would propound to you, is this; Are you willing to bear the diſpleaſure of God? can you undergo the weight of that wrath which made his back to ake, who was mighty to do and ſuffer? can you with any patience hear that dreadful word pronounced by the mouth of that Judg, which will ſee to the execution of his ſentence, *Depart from me ye curſed unto everlaſting torment; Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, for I know you not?* Can you endure without any trouble that ſcalding hot wrath which is abundantly more painful then Fire and Brimſtone, more intolerable then to be ſhut up in a burning fiery Furnace, or to be boyled in a Caldron of melted Lead, or whatſoever torments the wit of men or Devils can invent? Can you with any patience bear the Stone, Gout, Tooth-ach, Chollick, or ſome ſuch diſtempers of body which laſt but for a while? O how long do you think the time when you are in that condition? how do you toſs and tumble? what lamentable moan do you make? do not you think you can't be too much pitied in that condition? how then will you be able to lie down in thoſe torments, the leaſt drop of which is abundantly more painful then the greateſt torment that ever you felt in your life? If theſe ſeem dreadful to you, why do you not go the way to avoid them? which is by getting an intereſt in him who hath the Keys of Hell at his gridle; for there is no condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus, to them that are brought into a ſtate of Reconciliation and Acquaintance with God by his Son our Mediatour.

Queſt. 8. Are you contented to loſe everlaſting happineſs? Can you willingly ſee *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and a great many from all the quarters of the world, to ſit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and your ſelves caſt out? How do you like to have thoſe which you ſcorned to look upon, to be ſet at the Table at the Feaſt, and your ſelf ſhut out with the Dogs? would you not be glad to have a word of comfort ſpoke to you, when your ſoul is juſt a taking its leave of your body? would you not be glad then to be be conveyed by the bleſſed Angels into the preſence of God, and to be crowned with an immortal and glorious Crown? would it do you any harm to be perfect in holineſs and happineſs when you die? would you not be glad to be ſaved when others ſhall be damned? in a word, do you not deſire to be rejoycing and praiſing of God in endleſs pleaſures, when others ſhall be weeping & curſing of God in endleſs torments? why then do not you live the lives of the righteous, if you would die their deaths and have your latter end like theirs? if you would be glorious and happy for ever, why do you not endeavour to be holy and ſpiritual in time? if you would have God your Friend in another world, what do you mean that you labour no more to be acquainted with him in this world?

Queſt. 9. How would you take it at any mans hands, to be ſerved as you ſerve God? Suppoſe you ſhould take up a poor Child that came to your door to beg, that had ſcarce a rag to cover his nakedneſs, nor a morſel of bread to put into his mouth, and no where to hide his head; Suppoſe you ſhould ſtrip this poor begger of his rags

and

and cloath him in very good apparel, and take him into your own houſe, and take as much care of him, as if he were your own child: ſuppoſe after this you ſhould bid him do you ſome ſmall piece of ſervice, and he in ſtead of it ſhould ſay, *Comand your man, and do your work your ſelf*; and in ſtead of anſwering your kindneſs, ſhould offer you the greateſt abuſe in the world, and afterwards conſpire with a company of Rogues to rob & murther you, how would you like this? ſhould you think that ſuch a fellow as this did not deſerve a halter rather then your favour? But now, if after this you ſhould ſend after this ungrateful wretch, and tell him, that you are willing to forget all that is paſt, and to receive him into the greateſt favour, and never to caſt his former wickedneſs in his teeth; how would you take it at his hands, if he ſhould ſtand I know not how long diſputing whether he ſhould accept of your kindneſs or no, whether he ſhould chooſe the Gaol and Gallows, or your Houſe? but if after all this you ſhould ſend meſſenger after meſſenger, and offer to give him all that you have in the World, and to beſtow your only Daughter upon him, and to ſettle preſently a great Eſtate upon him with her; how would you take it if this vile ungrateful beggar ſhould put you off a great while together with ſome poor excuſe or other? how would you like it if he ſhould make light of all your offers, and tell you he thanks you for nothing, and ſhould undervalue your kindneſs? Would you not ſoon reſolve not to trouble your ſelf any longer with ſuch an unthankful monſter? would you not let him take his courſe, and not much pity him, if he afterwards ſee the dif-

ference between a Fathers houſe and a Gaol, between Liberty and a Priſon, between Riches, Glory and Pleaſure, and Poverty, Diſhonour and Sorrows? would you not bid him never expect kindneſs more at your hands; but ſeeing he would not be ruled, to take what follows? What do you ſay, would you not do thus? I am perſwaded you would. But ſhould I unriddle this Parable, who do you think would be condemned? your own mouth would accuſe you, and you would be your own Judg. Thou art that man that haſt dealt thus diſingeniouſly with God, thou art that beggar to whom the Lord hath ſhewed much kindneſs, and offered more; he hath ſent meſſenger after meſſenger, and at laſt he hath ſent his Son to invite thee to his own houſe, and he offers to make you as happy as Heaven, Glory and happineſs it ſelf can make you, and you ſtand ſtill demurring, and add one delay to another, and are far from that grateful and ſpeedy compliance which the nature of the thing doth require; and in ſtead of coming at Gods call, and a thankful owning of his marvellous kindneſs, how baſely doſt thou prefer thy company, thy luſt before him, and offer the moſt intollerable affronts to his Majeſty, and make nothing of his unparal'd goodneſs, and continueſt in open rebellion againſt him? What then haſt thou to ſay for thy ſelf, why God ſhould not with a juſt abhorrency caſt thee off for ever? But now that God ſhould ſtill offer thee as high as ever, & (in ſtead of doing as I have ſaid, and as you your ſelf would have done in caſe of a leſs contempt) ſtill follow you with ſuch a gracious propoſal as this is, that I now make unto you;

is it not a miracle of mercy, a prodigy of kindneſs?

Queſt. 10. And now what will you do? Will you ſtill for all this go on in your contempt of God? Will you ſtill refuſe to know him, and never mind acquaintance with him? Will you ſtill be indifferent whether you have God for your Friend, or your enemy? Now you have been tendred ſuch a match, will you make another choice, will you beſtow your heart ſomewhere elſe? And when you have don that, dare you ſtand to your choice, and ſay, that you have don very wiſely in refuſing God, and in imbracing this preſent world? Will you maintain it at the day of judgement, that you have don well to refuſe acquaintance with himſelf, and to run the hazard of his diſpleaſure? But you will not, you ſay, trouble your head with ſuch melancholly fancies as theſe are; they are enough to put a man beſides his wits; you hope to do as well as others, and ſo long you care not. Well then, it ſeems you are reſolved; though, let me tell you, if you are contented to fare as moſt ſhall fare at laſt, you muſt be contented to be damned; for the Scripture is exceeding clear in this, that the number of thoſe that go to Heaven, is a very ſmall number; and if you will not take my word for it, (for indeed I would not that you ſhould take my word, nor any mans breathing without warrant from Gods word, in things of ſo high a nature) look into the Scripture, and at your leiſure, ponder a while upon theſe following Texts, *Luke* 13. 23, 24. *Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there few that ſhall be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them, Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for*

many,

many I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able, Mat. 20.16. *Many are called, but few are choſen.* And *Luke* 12.32. Chriſt ſaith, his flock is a little flock. And the Church complains of the fewneſs of her number in this Language. *Mic.* 7.1. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the ſummer-fruits.* I might heap up abundance of Scriptures, of the ſame nature, all which ſpeak this to us; that it is not ſo common a thing to go to Heaven as moſt people reckon upon. But yet if thou be reſolved, come what will come, not to change your mind; if after ſo many warnings, and pleadings, you ſtill continue of this judgement; I muſt ſpeak a dreadful word. Your blood be upon your own Soul. I have blown the Trumpet, I have don what in me lies to convince thee of thy dangerous ſtate while thou art a ſtranger to God, and to bring thee to a ſpeedy acquaintance with him; but thou haſt after many and many a tender given in this anſwer, that as for God thou doſt not deſire to be acquainted with him; as for your marching with his Son, it's that which thou careſt not for hearing of, except thou mighteſt have his eſtate without his Soveraignty; thou wilt not have him for thy husband, except he will let thee do as thou liſt, and run a whoring from him when thou pleaſeſt; Thou wilt not have Heaven, except thou mayſt have it without holineſs, and as for the invitations of God, thou ſtill makeſt light of them, neither promiſes nor threatnings ſignifie much with you. Well then, when you find by woful experience what you have don, know whom you muſt lay all the blame on. I call Heaven and Earth to record, and you your ſelves are witneſſes,

neſſes, that I have with all the pity and earneſtneſs that I could for my ſoul told you of theſe great things: but you think the flattering offers that the Devil makes to be more advantagious then thoſe which God makes, and his ſervice to be preferred before the ſervice of Chriſt, and the friendſhip of the world to be eſteemed before the friendſhip of God; and the pleaſures of ſin, which are but for a ſeaſon, you value before thoſe rivers of pleaſures which are at the right hand of God for evermore. Now, if you continue in this mind, blame not me if you miſcarry for ever; you muſt whether you will or no ſtand to your choice. Do not ſay but you were told of theſe things; this is not the firſt time by many, but it may be the laſt that you may ever hear for all that I know. Remember you were once well offered. Do you think that God will always bare with ſuch unworthy abuſes? ſhall Gods Juſtice never be righted? yes, yes, be not deceived, ſlighted kindneſſes will coſt dear at laſt. What have you yet to ſay for your ſelf? do you think that I mean you any hurt by all this? except you count Salvation a wrong, and kindneſs it ſelf an injury. But if all this will not do, go then and make the beſt thou canſt of all thy Friends; let us ſee how well, and how long they will entertain thee: ere a few dayes it may be, ſhall be at an end, we ſhall hear how you like your choice; when they ſhall turn you out of doors, and tell you plainly, they can do nothing for you, you muſt ſhift as well as you can, as for them, they can't provide for themſelves, much leſs for you. And then let's ſee who hath made the beſt choice, he that is acquainted with God, and choſen him

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for his Friend, or he that hath taken the world for his friend? Let's ſee who will do moſt for their friends, when a time of trial comes. When Heaven and Earth are all in a Flame, when the Trumpet is ſounding, when the Judge and his Attendants, Chriſt and all his holy Angels, are coming, when the Priſons the Graves are opened, and the Priſoners are brought forth, then let's ſee who will have the chearfulleſt countenance, he that holdeth up his hand at the bar, or they that ſit upon the bench with the Judge: for know you not that the Saints, the Friends of the Judge, ſhall ſit with him when he judgeth the world? We ſhall know when the ſtorm riſeth whoſe houſe was beſt, that which was built upon the ſand, or that which was built upon the rock. O that people were now of the ſame mind that they will be of at the day of Judgement! O that they would conſider, that if they will not now be at leiſure to think of theſe things, they ſhall be at leiſure to repent of them hereafter. Do not talk of ſcorns, and reproaches, and ſuffering, what, do you think that Heaven will not make amends for all that? which is moſt to be feared, the ſcorns of God, or the ſcorns of men? which will do you muſt hurt, mans contempt, or Gods? where is the man that will be laughed out of a great eſtate? becauſe a fool ſaith, that a Jewel is not worth the taking up, will you therefore never ſtoop to take it up? The truth of it is, if you intend to make any thing of your Profeſſion, you muſt be willing to be counted a fool, and a mad man: but you muſt remember, it is by thoſe that are ſo themſelves. O be not affrighted from your duty by the talk of the rabble. If the

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thing be evil, let the vice of it ſcare you; but if it be good, let not the fear of them which are very incompetent judges in ſuch a caſe divert you from it. Do you think that ſuch poor excuſes will be taken at the day of Judgement? What do you intend to ſay to God then? Lord, I would have laboured to have known thee, I would have taken ſome care of my ſoul, and I would have taken ſome pains about the things of Eternity, but that I ſaw that almoſt every one that did with any ſeriouſneſs look after ſuch matters, were ſcorned, laughed at, &c. When I had had got into the company of thoſe that were godly, and I had half a mind to go with them to Heaven, then my friends fell a jeering of me, and ask'd me whether I meaned to be mad to undo my ſelf to turn Puritane and Phanatick? Do you, I ſay, believe that ſuch a plea will ſtop the mouth of the Judge, and keep him from pronouncing the ſentence againſt you? will this hold the hands of Juſtice? will the thoughts of this quench or cool theſe dreadful flames? Be better adviſed, O be better adviſed for your ſouls ſake, and conſider how ſuch creatures will befool themſelves. Who would upon ſuch a trifle part with Heaven? that would be laughed out of Glory, and jeered into Hell? Is your mind yet altered? have you any thoughts or reſolutions to look after your ſoul and acquaintance with God? Are there none of you all that ask by this time, what ſhall I do to be acquainted with God? are there none of you that begin to think that it is high time to look out for a Friend in a time of need? have I all this while been beating the air, and laboured in vain? ſhall I leave you all as I found you?

you? God forbid. Methinks I hear ſome poor ſouls crying out by this time, O that I had but ſuch a Friend that would bring me acquainted with God! O that I had but a ſaving knowledg of Jeſus Chriſt! O that I did but underſtand what it means to have Communion with the Father and the Son, through the Spirit! I ſee my ſelf undone and loſt for ever, except I have an Intereſt in this Friend. O who will bring me to him? How ſhall I get acquainted with him? O that is a ſweet language! That's a very good queſtion, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* but do you ſpeak in ſober ſadneſs? do you ſpeak in jeſt or in earneſt? If any one would give you advice and direction, would you follow it in ſpite of all the oppoſition of Hell? What do you ſay, will you labour to keep exactly to thoſe Directions that ſhall be given? if you will, I do not queſtion but that you and God will be acquainted before you die. But, O let not me take a great deal of pains and all to little purpoſe, as to you; do not now ſerve me as the *Jews* did *Jeremiah*, come and ask Counſel of God, and take the Devils. But in hopes that ſome poor ſouls may in good earneſt deſire Directions with an intent to follow them, I ſhall give them as follows.

I. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, labour to get a through ſenſe of your great eſtrangment from him, and of the danger of ſuch an eſtrangement. This is that which makes people ſo well contented with their condition, becauſe they ſee no great evil nor danger in it. Men are ready to think

think very well of their condition, although they be enemies to God, and no Friends to Christ. Enemies to God! they scorn your words, though all this while they express the greatest contempt of him conceivable; though they regard neither his Commands, Threatnings, nor Promises, though they value the company of a drunkard, a whore, before the company of God; though they do all that they can against God, Love nothing that he loves, though they side with Gods greatest enemies, yet they abhor to be thought to be any others then well wishers to Christ, and the Friends and Servants of God; though they never come near God, yet they take it very ill if they be not reckoned amongst his acquaintance, and speciall Friends. Where is the professor almost living, that doth not count it a high piece of uncharitableness, if one do not Canonize them among the Saints, though they live more like bruites! How hainously do they take it, if any one do but question their state? They ignorant of God! They enemies to the Cross of Christ, they blind! they unconverted! Who is that man which dare question their condition? They hope to fare as well as any precise Puritan of them all, they will hope to be saved, say what you will then, you shall never beat them out of their trust in God. And though in Faithfulness to their Souls, we beg of them to make a more diligent inquiry into the state of their Souls, because we know that the heart is so deceitful, and we have very great cause to suspect that they know not God; yet they will go on very cheerfully with this confidence, untill Christ himself shew them their mistake, and tell them plainly that he knows

knows them not, and that he never accounted them any of his Friends. But now did men but throughly understand their natural estrangement from God, were they but indeed sensible of the vileness of their hearts, did they but take notice of the Rebellions and Treasons that are within, the case would be far otherwise with them then it is. O this, this is the reason why so many millions of professors miscarry everlastingly, and never come to desire the friendship of God, because they never believed that they were any otherwise then friends, they do not suspect themselves at all, but think that they are rich, and encreased in goods, and have need of nothing, whereas the Lord knows, and Christians know too, that they are poor, and blind, and naked. But now, when men begin to be thorowly sensible of his enmity that is in their natures against God; when they see what mutinies and rebellions there are in them against their most gracious Lord and King; and when they are made to understand the consequences of this War, then how sensibly do they cry out, what shall they do? was there ever any poor wretched creatures in worse condition then themselves? was ever any ones heart worse then theirs? are there any out of hell that are such Monsters of sin as they are? O what shall they do? they see the Fire kindled, and themselves hanging over everlasting burnings; now all the world for a Christ; they believe now that God and Man are not equals; that there is no contending with the Almighty: who can stand before his indignation? and when they see Gods Sword drawn, and the poynt of it set against their heart, when they behold the terrours of the Lord

Lord ſetting themſelves in array againſt them, and themſelves like to loſe all, then how welcome would the news of a Parly be? How glad would they be then to hear of a Pardon? Then down go their weapons; they will ſooner come before God with a Halter about their Necks, than a Sword by their ſides; they will fight now with no other weapons but Tears and Prayers: As for their Armour, they break it in pieces, and lay it at the feet of their offended Prince; and O if they might but have any hopes of pardon, it would revive their hearts; if they might have but a look of kindneſs from God, it would be a greater comfort to them than all the whole World beſides could afford them. To whom can a skilful Phyſitian be more welcome, than to the ſick? Chriſt came to ſeek the loſt, and ſuch as theſe we are ſent to encourage: But till the ſoul comes to this paſs, a Chriſt is not valued at all by it: If ſinners be not made thus to underſtand themſelves, why, though we ſhould plead with never ſo much earneſtneſs with them, we do but beat the air; all that we can ſay ſignifies very little. The man thinks his great work is done, though his hands have been all this while in his boſome; he is far onwards in his Journey to Heaven, though he never ſet one ſtep out of his own doors; he hath an intereſt in God, and is very well acquainted with him, and hath an aſſured confidence of his condition, that he ſhall be happy, though he have not one drachm of grace. He is a good Churchman, he hath ſat at the Lords Table, and the like: But O how many are there which ſhall ſee, and know that it is more than poſſible, to come oft before God, and to complement him much,

and to ſit oft at his Table, and yet not to be any of his peculiar Friends, and ſpecial Acquaintance; now if ever you would make any thing of Religion, and be made highly to praiſe Gods favour, & to be really acquainted with him; you muſt labour to underſtand your diſtance from him, and the unconceivable hazard that you run, while you are in a ſtate of Separation from God; that there is but one ſtep between you, and the ſtate of the Damned; for what would become of you, if God ſhould ſay to you, this night thy Soul ſhall be required of you. How eaſily can God in a moment ſtop your breath, and ſend your Soul and Body into that lake that burns for ever & ever? & is it not then time for you to look about you? O this ignorance of our ſelves, how doth it expoſe us? (*Ar. Epict.* l. 1. c. 26.) He was not a whit miſtaken, who ſaid, *That the not knowing of our ſelves, was one of the chiefeſt cauſes of our ſin and miſery, and that the conſideration of the ſtate of the Soul, and that through underſtanding it's depravedneſs, was the beginning of Wiſdom; for it's weakneſs being well known, a man will not afterwards truſt it in the determination of the greateſt things; but man will be deſirous to conſult that great Oracle, the will of his Maker; and finding his old guide is blind, and hath oft miſled him, thereupon he is the readier to be acquainted with ſuch a one, who may direct him in the way to true happineſs.* If you would therefore be acquainted with God, you muſt get well acquainted with your ſelves; you will upon the knowledg of your ſelf be afraid of your ſelf. He was none of the weakeſt men who ſaid, *That a true ſenſe of folly is no ſmall ſign of ſome proficiency in wiſdom,* Look into thy ſelf, O man, ſearch every

corner

corner, behold what abundance of Armour, there is in such and such a dark Celler; but is this Armour strong enough to encounter a God withal? Can'st thou with these Fig-leaves defend thy self against the arrowes of the Almighty? behold what a condition thou art in, if thou stirrest a step further. Yield speedily, and throw down thine Arms, or you are a dead man. Do you know this? do you really believe this? Is it possible? what believe that your Treason is found out, and that you are within a little of Execution, and yet not tremble, & yet not seek nor desire pardon. When a man throughly understands how things stand between him & God, and how unable he is to carry on a War against him, he will speedily cast about, how he may conclude a Peace upon any terms. As soon as *Benhadad* knew what a condition his Army was in, when he saw the Crowns of his thirty Kings shaken, and his warlike Captains cut in pieces, or to tremble, & be like women, when instead of a mighty Army of gallant Warriors in martial order, behaving themselves bravely in the field, he saw their karkases upon heaps, their garments rouled in blood, the Shields of his mighty Ones cast away, and himself wofully deserted, how speedily doth he send away his Servants, with Ropes about their Necks, to beg Peace upon any Terms? When the *Gibeonites* heard what dangerous fighting it was against *Joshuah*, they were not long before they made means to make a Covenant with him. So the Soul, when it doth seriously consider what a sad Condition it is in, while it continues in Rebellion against God; it's impossibility to stand it out long, and utter inability to conquer him: When it perceives the de-

ſigns of Satan, who firſt cauſed this difference between the Soul and God, and hath ſtill inſtigated and ſtirred it up to perſecute with all the violence that might be; I ſay, when the Soul ſees this before it is quite too late! O how doth it bewail it's condition, how doth it cry out, O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me? O what will become of me, if I make War ſtill againſt God? And as for flying, whether ſhall I fly from his preſence, and where ſhall I Hide my ſelf out of his ſight? And how ſhall I look him in the face, whom I have thus deſperately and ungratefully oppoſed? Can ſuch a Traytor as I poſſibly expect any mercy; if the Lord ſhould look upon me, and not immediately caſt me into Hell, it would be a miracle of Patience. And thus the man that begins a little to underſtand himſelf, ſpeaks to himſelf; and after that, he with *Ephraim*, ſmites upon his thigh, and bemoans his condition exceedingly! O that he ſhould ever take up Arms againſt his gracious Prince? O what ſhall become of him? Well, I have heard that the God of Heaven is a merciful King, I will go and caſt my ſelf at his feet, if I periſh, I periſh. If I continue in this rebellion, there is no hopes; if I fly there is no eſcaping; and if I yield, I can but periſh! O ſad, ſad is my condition, Woe and alas, what ſhall I do in theſe dreadful perplexities: But, why do I ſtay here? The avenger of blood followes after me apace; well, I will go to my God, through Chriſt, and I have heard that this is the only way, and that there is not the leaſt hope in the world, any other way to get a pardon, to eſcape the Wrath to come! O that the precious and merciful Jeſus would pitty me,

and

and ſtand my Frind now if ever! O that he would ſpeak a good word for me, *Have mercy upon me, Jeſus thou Son of* David *have mercy me*! O make peace for me, by thy blood; if thou wilt, thou canſt do more with a word ſpeaking, then all the Saints and Angels in the world; if ever any poor Creature in the world had need of mercy, then have I. O mercy, mercy, mercy for thy bloods ſake! But becauſe I ſhall ſpeak to this under another Direction, I ſhall be the briefer. Now when a man is at this paſs, he is in a fair way for peace; but now as long as a man is ignorant of all this, he is quite in another note, he will never buckle, and therefore he ſhall be broken. Therefore conſider well your condition, obſerve the actings of your own Soul; if you be one of the Friends and Acquaintance of God, what means your breaking and hating of his Spiritual Laws? What's the reaſon, if you love God, that you can take no delight at all in his company, no pleaſure in his Sabbaths? If you are a Friend of God, how hap you come no oftner to his houſe, when he dwells ſo near you? Why do you knock no oftner at his door? Why are you ſo rare in your viſits? Is this your kindneſs? Is this like a Friend? How comes it to paſs th t there are ſo many Arms found hid in your houſe? What are they all for? What is the meaning of all thoſe Meetings that you give to Gods Enemies? What do all thoſe whiſperings, plots, and projects ſignifie? Is this friendſhip? Can you mean any good by all this? What do you ſay of your condition? Do you ever complain, and that feelingly of your enemy againſt God? Did you ever obſerve what a deſperate wicked ſpirit you

have againſt your Maker; and were you ever made ſenſible of the danger of ſuch a ſtate, and aſhamed and grieved to the very ſoul that you ſhould ever engage againſt ſo good a God? why then I am confident you can't but cry out with all the ſtrength and earneſtneſs of your ſoul for a peace, you can't but deſire to meet with your adverſary quickly, while he is in the way. But if you ſee nothing at all of the Treachery and Baſeneſs that is in your heart, ſearch, and ſearch again, it's your Ignorance and Blindneſs, and not the goodneſs of your ſtate, that makes you to know nothing by your ſelf. What, are you better than *David?* he was ſo jealous of his own heart, that he dared not to truſt to his own Examination of it, but he deſires the great Heart-ſearcher to help him in this work. Are you more excellent than *Paul* after his Converſion? Had he more reaſon to complain of himſelf than you have? O be at leiſure to look within, and get *Davids* Candle and Lanthorn to go into thoſe dark corners of your ſoul with it, and it may be you may ſee that within which may make your heart to ake, and your joynts to quiver, and your ſpirits to faint within you. *Paul* was ſometime as confident as you, he took no notice of the Enmity that was within againſt God, though he was as full of it as an Aſp is of Poyſon; yet before he came acquainted with God, the caſe was altered with him, he was of another mind when that light ſhined about him, & he cried out, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* he now thinks it is *hard kicking againſt the Pricks*, dangerous oppoſing of God, and perſecuting of Chriſt in any of his Members; and he deſires nothing in the world

world ſo much as to be reconciled to God, and to have him for his friend, whom before he fought againſt as an Enemy.

II. DIRECTION.

My next *Direction* to thoſe which would be acquainted with God, ſhall be this: Get an humble heart, which is the conſequent of the former. God will exalt none to this high honour of being his Friends, but ſuch as have low Thoughts of themſelves. The humble are the perſons that he will raiſe, theſe are they that he will converſe moſt with, theſe are the great Favourites of Heaven which God doth delight to honour, *Pſal.* 34. 18. *The Lord is nigh to them which are of a broken heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit.* God is nigh to them, (with Reverence be it ſpoken) God takes ſo much complacency in the company of ſuch, that he can't endure to have them far from him, he muſt have them always nigh to him, always under his eyes; as for theſe broken ones, he will to be ſure not leave them long, not go far from them, but will be ready at hand to ſet their bones, to bind up their wounds, to keep them from feſtering. It may be he may put them to much pain before he brings the Cure to perfection, but it is to prevent future Aches. He is a fooliſh cruel Chirurgeon, who for fear of putting his Patient to ſome pain, never ſearcheth the wound, but skins it over preſently: and a wiſe man will not think him unmerciful that puts him to exquiſite pain, ſo he make a through Cure of it. Thus God doth by his Patients ſometimes, when the nature of their Diſtemper calls for it.

But

But however, he will be ſure not to be out of the way when they want him moſt. It's poſſible they may look upon themſelves as forgotten by God, they may not know their Phyſician when he is by them, and they may take their Friend for an Enemy, they may think God far off when he is near; but when their eyes are opened, and their diſtemper is pretty well worn off, they will with ſhame and thankfulneſs acknowledge their Error; nay, they do from their ſouls confeſs that they do not deſerve the leaſt look of Kindneſs from God, but to be counted ſtrangers and enemies; but God will let them know that he loves to act like himſelf; that is, like a God of Love, Mercy, and Goodneſs; and that they are the perſons that he hath ſet his heart upon; he will have them in his Boſome, never leave them nor forſake them; and though theſe contrite ones many times look upon themſelves as loſt, yet God will ſave them, and they ſhall ſing a Song of thankfulneſs amongſt his delivered ones. Again, the Sacrifices of God are a broken heart: *A broken and a contrite Spirit, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal.* 51.17. The proud ſinner he may bring his ſtalled Oxen, multitudes of Rams and Sheep, and his Rivers of Oyl, and yet all this while not be accepted. There is another kind of Sacrifice that would be ten thouſand times more acceptable to God. We read that Sacrifices have been deſpiſed, Prayers, long Prayers have been rejected; Sabbaths, New-Moons, and Solemn Aſſemblies the Lord hath ſometimes abhorred; but we never read that he deſpiſed the Sacrifice of an humble heart, the Prayers of ſuch always have an anſwer one way or other; their poor performances,

mances, their chatterings, and mournings, are ſweet melody, and powerful Rhetorick in Gods ear. Who are the men that have moſt of Gods company? who are they which he doth moſt frequently viſit? Are they not ſuch as look upon themſelves as the chiefeſt of ſinners? Theſe are they which are wrapped up into the third Heaven. None have ſo much of Heaven upon Earth as thoſe that wonder that the Earth doth not ſwallow them up, and that they are not in Hell. But, O ſaith the humble Soul, God is the high and mighty God, and infinite in his Holineſs and Juſtice; how then can ſuch a Creature as I ever expect that he ſhould ſo much as caſt his eye upon me? Yes, ſweet ſoul, ſuch is the infinite condeſcenſion and goodneſs of God, that he will ſooner look upon thee than another. And if you can't credit my words, here what he ſpeaks himſelf, *Iſa.* 7. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of my contrite ones.* The thoughts of Gods Majeſty, Eternity, and Holineſs may, and with good reaſon too, awe that Soul that hath low thought of it ſelf. Every ſinner hath cauſe enough to cry out with aſtoniſhment, Will God look upon ſuch a vile ſinful wretch as I am? Will he that is infinite in holineſs take any notice of me, except to ſhew his diſpleaſure againſt me? What ſhall I do? ſure ſuch a creature as I can't without a miracle have a ſmile from God. God may indeed look upon me in his Wrath, and vex me in his ſore Diſpleaſure. God may juſtly look me into Hell; but that he

ſhould

ſhould look upon me in kindneſs, or take any ſpecial notice of me in love, that would be a Wonder indeed. What, God dwell with me? Yes, with thee, if thou haſt but high thoughts of him, and low thoughts of thy ſelf; the meaner thou thinkeſt of thy ſelf, the greater worth he ſees in thee. God will not only look upon thee, nor will he only knock at thy door, and call at your houſe, or give you a tranſitory viſit, but he will come and dwell with thee. Now dwelling ſpeaks a continued abode with one, and thus God will continue with the Humble; never remove from them, for any conſiderable time, till eternity hath an end, till himſelf, and the ſoul ceaſe to be, which will be never. God will not be a ſtranger to humble Souls, but he will come to them, and bring that along with him that ſhall make him, and them welcom too. God never comes to his Friends, but he brings good chear along with him. When the Soul gives God the beſt entertainment, it is all at his coſt, his bread, his fatlings, his wine, his oyl, his cordials, his rich dainties. Where God comes, he will keep a noble houſe, & there ſhall be mirth and rich cheer good ſtore, *Iſa.*66 1, 2 *Thus ſaith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, & Earth is my foot-ſtool: Where is that houſe ye will build me? And where is the place of my reſt? For all theſe things hath my hand made, and all theſe things hath been, ſaith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.* God ſeems to have low thoughts of Heaven it ſelf in compariſon of an humble ſoul: This is the Pallace, where this great King will keep his Court; this is the place of his reſt. God is not ſo much de-

lighted

lighted and pleaſed in any of his brave Seats, as in this of an Humble Heart; here he dwelleth moſt commonly; this was the great purchaſe of his own Son; this was the Maſter-piece of his Power and Goodneſs; this was the project of infinite wiſdom and counſel. *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Is a Language that makes Hell in a rage, and Heaven to rejoyce. God is never ſo well pleaſed as when he beholds the beauty of his own Grace ſhining in a poor loſt ſelf-debaſing Creature. The ſpouſe is adorned with Humility, when Chryſt gives her that viſit, *Cant.* 1. 4. God hath far more kindneſs for one that lies under a ſenſe of his own Vileneſs, that thinks himſelf unworthy to tread upon Gods Earth, or to breath in his Air, then for the moſt confident righteous Phariſee in the World. Such an humble Soul will be much in admiring of God, and will ſet a high price upon his kindneſs; a look, a ſmile, a viſit! O how welcom are they to thoſe poor trembling Ones! Wherefore God doth with frequency and love viſit them; he knows that he can never be unwelcome to ſuch, they will count it the higheſt honour, that the moſt high ſhould come into them in their low Condition. Wherefore if you deſire to have any intimate acquaintance with God, labour to be more and more ſenſible of your own unworthineſs, ſtudy your heart and nature well, and be more curious in the obſervance of the baſeneſs and treachery of your own Soul; endeavour to have as mean thoughts of your ſelf as *Paul* had, who did not ſtick to call himſelf the chiefeſt of ſinners: Humble your ſelves before the Lord, and he will exalt you; he that is little in his own eye, is greater in

Gods

Gods. When was it that *Jacob* met with God, but when he had been humbling of himself? As you may read at your leisure, *Gen.* 23. There is many a professor that holds out many a year in a course of external performances, and yet never knows what it is to have any intimate acquaintance or converse with God: whereas I am perswaded, if the business were throughly examined, it would be found that they were never made deeply sensible of their undone state out of Christ, never understood the desperate depravedness of their hearts, and nature; that they never lay under any lively sense of their separation from, and enmity against God, and they were never brought off from their own righteousness, and saw themselves poor, beggarly, starved Creatures; and in this condition came to buy Wine and Milk without money, and without price. But this humility, it is an excellent Grace, it makes the soul fit for the richest enjoyments of God, and to do God the greatest service. Were it possible that God should converse much with a proud man, he would make strange use of it, he would steal God's Crown, and put it upon his own head; but God would not endure proud Angels near him, and can it be expected that he should take proud men in their places? The more any one grows in Grace, and acquaintance with God, the more he sees of his own unworthiness, the more he admires Free Grace. Why, me Lord! why me! will be the Language of those which converse with God: And while they are thus admiring God, and laying themselves low, he comes again with his soul-ravishing kindnesses; and thus by humility they are more acquainted with God,

and

and being more acquainted with God, they are made more humble, and the one increaseth the other. Thus the humble soul is raised higher and higher, till he come to an eternal possession of God in the highest Heavens. When an humble Saint lives as it were in Heaven upon Earth, he scarce thinks himself worthy to live upon the Earth. When any one speaks well of him, and admireth the grace of God in him, he looks upon himself as an unprofitable Servant, and he durst not assume the least glory to himself; not unto me, not unto me, but unto the Lord be the praise given. Who am I poor wretch? O did you but know what a heart I have, did you but see the workings of my thoughts, could you but tell how things are, indeed you would rather admire at Gods patience, than mans excellency. This he speaks, not that he is worse than others, but because he hath a more spiritual sence of his state than others have: Neither doth he speak thus in proud Policy, thinking to make others to have a better esteem of him for his humility; but he doth really feel the pressure of that filthiness of sin, which makes him thus to groan out these complaints. The reason why God doth converse most with the humble, is because they will be most thankful, and most fruitful, and make the wisest improvement of his favours. Wherefore, if you value the comfort of a spiritual life, if you desire communion with God, if you would have a Heaven upon Earth, endeavour to get and humble heart: To walk humbly, and to walk with God, go together.

III. Di-

III. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you muſt viſit him often, be much at his houſe, knock at his door many times in a day, and reſolve to continue knocking till he open; and if he do not come preſently, wait for him; you would do as much for your Prince, and it may be to a meaner perſon. We can't expect to be acquainted with them that we will not come near. It is to no purpoſe for that man to ſpeak of acquaintance with God, who never ſpeaks to him, comes at him, or enquires after him. Neither will a ſlight viſit or two in a Tranſitory complemental manner ſerve the turn; a man may do this, and yet not be ſaid to be acquainted with God. A ſtranger may come once to your houſe that was never there before, and never intends to come again; and I believe you will ſcarce write ſuch a own down amongſt your ſpecial friends and intimate acquaintance. So in Spirituals; for acquaintance and converſe with God are no ſuch ſlight things as the world commonly take them to be. If you would make any thing of this great work of getting acquaintance with God, you muſt not jeſt in it, you muſt give God many ſolemn and ſet-viſits, and carry your ſelf with all the obſervance and reſpect to him that you can for your ſoul. This is that which keeps many thouſands of ſtrangers from the life of Grace, and intimate acquaintance with God, becauſe they know not what thoſe more peculiar viſits of God mean; they underſtand not what it is to draw nigh to God in ſecret; they come not to him with thoſe more ſpiritual acts of Religion; they

pray,

pray, it may be, in their Families, and it may be that but ſeldom (but by the way, never let ſuch pretend to the Knowledge of God, who call not upon him in their Families) but what they do, it is but in a poor formal perfunctory manner between ſleep and awake; and will you call this acquaintance with God? will you call this an act of Adoration and ſpiritual Worſhip? Is it to bow down a while before God, and to read or ſpeak a few words, and there's an end? their work is over, their task is done, and they are glad of it. But now ſuch as theſe do not come into Gods Chambers; they come to his Houſe, as I may ſo ſay, but they regard not whither he be at home, whether they ſpeak to God, and have an anſwer from God or no; they call indeed, but deſire not much to be heard; they knock, but are not very careful to ſtay till the door be opened. But alas, alas, ſuch as theſe can't tell what it is to enjoy communion with God. They have got, it may be, into ſome courſe of external performances, by reaſon of the Example of their Superiours, Education, or by being under the ſound of the Goſpel, and from ſome force that natural conſcience doth put upon them, which will not be content except ſomething be done. But ſuch as theſe may not be ſaid to viſit God in that manner that I would perſwade them to, which would be acquainted with God; for all this they ſtand a great way off from God, and may be termed ſtrangers and forraigners. How ſeldom are they upon their knees in ſecret? How rare a thing is it for them with *Iſaac*, to go into the field to meditate? They viſit their Farms, they viſit their Flocks, they viſit their Swine, they go often to

viſit

uiſit their ſottiſh drunken Companions, whileſt God and Chriſt, their Bible, their Cloſet, their Hearts are forgotten, and ſeldom or never viſited. And is this true kindneſs to ones ſelf? Is it any wiſdom to ſlight ſuch a Friend as God would be to us, and to make ſo much of ſuch ſorry Companions? O ſtupid and dull ſouls! O what do we mean ſo ſtrangely to forget our ſelves! For who is like to get by it, God or we, when we come and feed at his Table, and ſpend upon his coſt? O little do people think what they might enjoy, would they purpoſely ſet themſelves to meet with God, and go to his houſe with a ſtrong reſolution, not to come away from him till they have ſeen him, or heard from him. Now the great duties in which the ſoul may be ſaid to viſit God in, and in which God doth many times give out much of himſelf to to the ſoul, are theſe:

1. Solemn Meditation.

2. Secret Prayer.

3. Faſting.

4. Community of Experiences, and Communion with the Saints.

5. The *Lord's* Supper.

1. *Meditation.* When the Soul doth fix it ſelf upon the Thoughts of ſome Spiritual and Divine object, ſuch as the love of God in Chriſt, the glory of another world, *&c.* This is, as it were, going out to meet the Lord, and to take a walke with our Beloved; this is the getting up to Mount *Piſgah*, to take a ſurvey of that goodly Land. When the ſoul doth, as it were, bathe it ſelf in the Contemplation of Chriſts beauty, and labours to enamour it ſelf more and more with his love; and to throw it ſelf, as I may ſo ſay, into

that

that Ocean of Divine goodneſs; it will ſcarce leave till it be wound up to the higheſt pitch of admiration, of that infinite boundleſs love which ſhould do ſuch glorious things for ſo vile and contemptible, for ſo rebellious and unthankful wretch as that is. O what manner of love is this! O that I were ſick of love! O that I might die ſick of love! O that I were once in the embraces of my deareſt Lord and Husband! O that I could do nothing elſe day and night, but praiſe, love, and admire this infinite boundleſs love! And did Chriſt indeed offer up his life for my ſin? Did he not think his precious heart blood too dear for me? And ſhall I think my heart-love too dear for him? What, for me, Lord, which am the chiefeſt of ſinners! Here, here's kindneſs with a witneſs. Stand ſtill, O my ſoul, and admire, ſtand looking upon this lovely ſight till thou art all on fire. Theſe are the pure flames, here thou needeſt not to fear to exceed; widen thy ſoul, let thy affections run without controle. More fire ſtill, blow hard, it doth yet but ſmoke; O for ſome coals from the altar! O for more fire, more fuel! O that my heart were vehemently inflamed in the ſtrongeſt love to him, who ſtill deſerves a thouſand times more! Help me all ye Angels, to bleſs and adore his marvellous loving kindneſs. Chriſt is a friend to Publicans and Sinners indeed, or ſuch a one as I had never been on this ſide of Hell. O love, love, love! What ſhall I render unto the Lord? O that men would bleſs the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! O what meaneſt thou, O my ſoul, that thou art yet ſo cold? Awake, awake Pſaltery and Harp, I my ſelf will

awake and praiſe, admire and love thee, O my God, whoſe love to my ſoul is beyond expreſſion. And thus while the ſoul is muſing, the Fire begins to burn; while the Spouſe is thinking of her glorious Husband, he knocks at the door, ſhe draws the Latch, and he comes in ſmelling of Mirrhe, Aloes, and Caſſia; he comes and kiſſes the ſoul with the kiſſes of his lips, his love is better than wine, he comes and takes the ſoul into his arms. O the ſweet pleaſure of Divine Love, infinitely tranſcending all carnal Affections! O the joy that is at this meeting, far ſurpaſſing humane apprehenſion! O the ſweet entertainment that God and the Soul gives each other at ſuch a time! I appeal to the experience of thoſe that have been much exerciſed in this great Duty of *Meditation*, if they have been in good earneſt in the work, I am confident they can ſay ſomething to this point. What ſayeſt thou, O Chriſtian, which art uſed to imitate *Iſaac*? didſt thou never meet with another-gueſs Companion than *Rebeccah*? As he met with a Wife, ſo thou haſt met with thy Husband! When thou haſt been in the Field, or Cloſet, at this work, hath not Chriſt then taken you by the hand, and led you into his Garden, and made you to taſte of his pleaſant Fruits? hath he not brought you into his Banqueting-houſe, and brought out ſome of his choiceſt dainties? are not thoſe Flaggons more full of Spirit, more Cordial, and refreſhing than Wine! O little do any but thoſe who have tried it, think what a life they might lead, if they would with ſeriouſneſs engage in this duty. Speak O ye gracious ones, that make conſcience of this Soul-raviſhing duty; ſpeak I beſeech you, and

do

do not ſmother the kindneſſes of God to you; ſpeak, and let him have the praiſe: It may be by your ventring your experience, hundreds may be encouraged to ſet upon the ſame work, and hundreds may alſo have the ſame experiences. What do you ſay? have you not found the benefit of this duty? did you never find *Meditation* a ſweet work? was it worth your while or no, to ſequeſter your ſelves a while from the world to talk with your Beloved? did you ever repent you of your Labour, and think your time loſt? have you not been able to ſay that at ſuch and ſuch a time, when you were in the Mount, that it was good being there? could you not have been almoſt content to have left the deareſt Relations, and to have quitted your intereſt in all Creature-comfort, ſo you might have had fuller enjoyments of God; could you not have been contented to paſs from Contemplation to Viſion and Fruition? why, ſpeak then for the Lords ſake, and for the ſake of precious ſouls, and keep not ſuch a thing as this is in; let your unexperienced Neighbours know what a Soul-raviſhing, and Soul-raiſing Duty *Meditation* is. Let me ask thee which readeſt theſe Lines, did you ever try what there was in this Duty of *Meditation*? I ſuppoſe, if you converſe much with ſuch Books as ſpeak of Communion with God, you can't but deſire ſomething of it, and I am perſwaded you have ſometimes wept ſince you began to read this Book, to think how little you experience; I believe you would be glad with all your Soul, to know what it is to be acquainted with God, and to have ſuch a Friend as I have been ſpeaking of. Why let me ask you again, did you ever try

what *Meditation* is? (You may read much of the excellency of this Duty, and Directions about it in Mr. *Baxters Saints Everlasting Reſt*) did you ever get out of the world, and intenſely fix your heart and thoughts upon any of the glorious Attributes of God? Did you ever ſet before your eyes his love in Chriſt? If not, O try and fall to this work ſeriouſly and ſpeedily, and you ſhall ſoon find the ſweetneſs of it; you will ſoon ſay that you loſt many a good meeting, many a dainty bit for want of going for it. A carnal worldly heart I muſt confeſs may poſſibly ſpoil this Duty, as all others, and grow formal in it, and be weary of it, and caſt it off (though, let me put in this, I believe its marvellous rare for a Hypocrit to have any thing to do in ſuch a ſecret duty as this is) but if they were true to the intereſt of their own ſouls in the management of this work, I am confident they would be every day more and more in love with this duty: For I am perſwaded that when the ſoul is in good earneſt, nay, I can ſpeak it poſitively, there is no duty doth ſo much raiſe and warm the ſoul; there is no duty wherein the people of God enjoy his ſweet company more than in this. This opens the treaſures of Gods kindneſs; this takes his Love tokens and preſents them to the view of the ſoul; this unlocks the Cabinets, and fetches out thoſe precious Jewels; by this the ſoul doth, as it were talk with its Beloved; and in this Chriſt doth, as it were, take the ſoul by the hand, and lead it into his Palace, and ſhews it all thoſe glorious things, which it ſhall ſhortly have in her poſſeſſion for ever. And how can this chooſe but engage the ſoul to expreſs its gratitude to the height

height in anſwer to ſuch love; and when the ſoul is in this frame, Chriſt will not be behind-hand with her, no love ſhall be loſt between them; If the Spouſe walk out to look for her Beloved, ſhe ſhall find him before ſhe hath done.

2 Another duty by which the Soul doth viſit God in a ſpecial manner, is *Secret Prayer*; by this the Soul knocks, and God is quick of hearing, and none of his Friends ſhall wait without doors ſo long as to catch cold. By this the Soul doth as it were ſtorm Heaven, by this it gets into the preſence Chamber, and preſents its requeſts. In this duty, a Chriſtian doth as it were return the Key of Heavens Doors, and by this he unlocks the door of his own Soul; and ſo there is free acceſs on both ſides, the Soul viſits God, and God viſits the Soul, and this creats an intimacy. The poor wounded Creature opens his wounds, and then the great Phyſician comes with the Balm of *Gilead*. When *Jacob* is thus weeping and praying alone, he meets with God, he meets a bleſſing, he wreſtles, he conquers. This duty of *Secret Prayer*, and that other of *Meditation*, are two fatning duties, by which the Souls of Believers come to Gods Table, and eat, and drink of ſtrengthening food; and for want of theſe, many poor ſouls are thin. O why do Chriſtians, why do Profeſſors maintain no fairer correſpondency with God in ſuch duties wherein he doth manifeſt himſelf more than ordinary to the Soul? The reaſon of this may be becauſe God accounts himſelf more highly honoured, and more truly loved by them which are much in theſe, than by others. By this a man doth as it were honour the goodneſs of God, in that it ſhews it worth the while to ſteal

out of the world, and to leave the beſt company on Earth to go to God: He honours the Truth of God, by being earneſt for what God hath promiſed though it be unſeen; he honours the Omniſciency of God, by contenting himſelf with his eye and his ear alone; he ſanctifies his Omnipreſence, by believing that his God can hear him and be with him in what corner ſoever he creeps into. I might be large in ſpeaking of the excellencies of this duty, but I refer it rather to another place. But I would not be miſtaken in what I have delivered, as if I would by this exclude Family-prayer, no, far be it from me; for God in theſe doth many times exceedingly refreſh his. But becauſe a man can't poſſibly judge ſo well of himſelf by publick prayer, as he can by ſecret: And hypocriſie and pride, do not uſually ſo much attend ſecret duty, as more publick. Its poſſible in more publick duty, that a man may be much raiſed, and be very warm, and high in his expreſſions, and almoſt raviſh the hearts of his Hearers, whereas he may be all that while acted only by a proud heart, and for all that I know, the Devil himſelf may help a man thus to pray ſometimes. This I am confident of, he is not afraid of ſuch prayers as theſe, which tend ſo much to the hardening of a ſinner, and makes him believe that his heart is warmed with communion with God, when as it is poſſible it is nothing but a ſecret ſelf-pleaſing, that theſe that joyned with him, might think very highly of him, as one that was paſſing Spiritual in his performances. O the heart of man is deep, and deſperately full of deceit! But now, there is none of this Temptation in ſecret Cloſet-prayer, and there a Soul may be more particular in its com-

plaints

plaints and petitions, more earneſt in pleading with God, and may uſe ſuch expoſtulations, poſtures, and geſtures, ſuch Intermiſſions, and groanings, ſuch pauſes as would be very unfit for more publick duty. Wherefore I lay ſomewhat the more ſtreſs upon this duty of *Secret Prayer*. But this I ſay again, where one of them is practiced conſcientiouſly, the other will not be neglected. I might add the practice & experience of Gods children to inforce this duty. *David* would never have been at it ſo oft, at midnight, if he had got nothing at all by it. *Peter* would ſcarce have forgot to eat, when he was an hungry, except he had met with a bit in a Corner to ſtay his ſtomach.

3. *Faſting*, eſpecially private *Faſting*, is another duty, wherein God meets the Soul, and the Soul viſits God. This is as it were execution day, the day when the Soul brings out all the Enemies of God to be crucified; this is the day wherein the Idols are ſearched for, brought out, and buryed, or ground to powder, and theſe are things which God will come to ſee with much delight. By this the Soul is as it were adorned, her deformities done away, and ſhe is trimmed up to meet her Beloved. When a Saint faſts from ſin, and abſtains from ſenſual pleaſures, then it is many times feaſted by God, and refreſhed with Spiritual enjoyments.

4. Another ſeaſon wherein God meets the ſoul, and the Soul is viſited by God, is, when Chriſtians are met together to communicate experiences, or to diſcourſe together about the great things of God. What though moſt of the world are aſhamed to own Religion when it is out of fa-

ſhion? What though but few dare meet together to ſpeak of Gods goodneſs, and to praiſe him, and call upon his Name? Why, Chriſt ſays, Though there be but two or three of them, he will make the number one the more, *he will be in the midſt of them*: And though they dare but whiſper, it may be, and their meetings to ſerve God, and do good to one another, may be prohibited by the publick Magiſtrate; and conſequently what they do in this kind, muſt be done in a great deal of hazard, yet the people of God ſtand not long diſputing, they know what to do in this caſe; yet they would be wiſe in it too: Not to dare the Magiſtrate, and to do what they do to confront Authority, but in the uprightneſs of their ſouls, they deſire to meet together to worſhip God according to his own will. Yet for all this, though they manage their buſineſs with never ſo much ſecreſie, God will take notice of them, he hearkens and hears, and a Book of remembrance is written for them that call on upon his Name, and God will make them up among his Jewels. But I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak of ſomething to this purpoſe afterwards, and therefore I paſs it over the more briefly.

5. Another time wherein the Lord is pleaſed to diſcover much intimacy, and indeared affection to his people, is in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. This is the great paſſeover, and it can't be unwelcome News to the poor *Iſraelite*, to hear of a Redemption from Wars, then Egyptian bondage, inſtead of being burdened with barbarous Task-maiters, to be made free, rich, and honourable, and to ſee the ſtrength of the enemy laid in the duſt. It is not for nothing

that

that this Paſſeover it to be had in everlaſting remembrance. If I ſhould appeal to the people of God that have kept this ſolemn Feaſt, and ask them how their hearts were affected, do they not all bow their Heads, and Hearts, and adore that Goodneſs that ſhould Save, Feed, and Feaſt them, and Puniſh, Kill, and Damn others. Are there not thouſands that can tell you, that Chriſts Fleſh is Bread indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed; no Proviſion ſo great, no Banquet ſo ſweet, ſo noble; no Intertainment comparable to that which the Princely Jeſus giveth to his Spouſe in that Ordinance: The King brings her into the Banqueting-Houſe, and his Banner over her is Love; ſhe is then made to underſtand, that the Kiſſes of his Lips do breath Life, and that his Viſits at ſuch a time, uſually leave behind them more ſpecial teſtimonies of the largeneſs of his Heart, the lovelineſs of his Nature, and of his matchleſs Excellency. Speak Chriſtian, what doſt thou ſay to this? Canſt thou not ſubſcribe to this? Art thou not able to ſay, that then thou haſt taſted and ſeen, couldſt thou not then go out and invite all the poor ſtarved hungry ſouls in the world, to come and ſee, and taſte? Art thou not able to ſay, come, and I will tell you what Chriſt hath done for my ſoul. Let me ask that Saint that hath been feaſted many a time, and oft, what he thought of his Entertainment: Were you not made welcome? Was not the joy of the Lord your ſtrength? Was not the Proviſion that the world entertains her friends with, but mean, courſe, unſavory, compared with it? Which was beſt, the Huſks, or the Bread, and fatted Calf, the Garlick and Onions, or the

Manna,

Manna, the Milk and Hony? 'Tis not without cauſe that the Faces of ſome do ſhine, their looks ſpeak, their Fare none of the meaneſt, and their Activity is not a diſparagement to their Keeper; inquire further, and you ſhall be informed if their experience be not too big for to be clothed in words. How oft have ſome of Chriſts favourites, after they have Dined with their Lord, been led forth into the Garden to walk; and oh the delightful ſhades that they have ſat under! At another time, Chriſt, not Satan, hath carried them as it were in his Arms, and Boſome, and ſet them upon the Pinacle of the Temple, not to make them giddy, and hazard their fall, but to let them underſtand how much he hath preferred them before others, and as long as they are upon that great Corner-Stone, no Storms can ſhake, in Chriſts Arms no fear of falling: At another time, the Soul hath been carried into the Mount of God, and there it hath ſeen Chriſt Transfigured, and beheld ſo much Brightneſs, Glory, and Majeſty in him, that hath reflected a Glory upon it ſelf, and even Transfigured the Soul, that its ſcarce like it ſelf, and there it could ſay, its good being here; and then Chriſt hath bid the Soul lift up its Eyes and look up to the Heavens, look round from one ſide to the other, and look beyond the viſible Heavens by Faith, to the Seat of the Bleſſed; well, all this is thine, to thee will I give it, I purchaſed it, I have paid for it, and 'tis thine, and live like one that is worth more than a world; live up to your Eſtate, expect that ſhortly I ſhould ſet you in the Poſſeſſion of all: And as for the World, look down upon that if it be worth thy accepting ſo much

much of it as is good for thee thou ſhalt have alſo. O did weak Chriſtians but know what ſtrength, joy, and comfort this Ordinance doth afford, I believe they would not be ſo hardly perſwaded to come when they are invited? Did they but underſtand how ſweet, how wholſome, how dainty the Diſhes are which Wiſdom prepares; could they but conceive what ſatisfaction, and fulneſs there is for the empty, what joy, and ſollace for the Mourning, and Diſconſolate, what ſtrength and quickning for the Weak, I am ready to think that they would ſcarce be ſo long abſent from the Lords Table: but think not that every one that ſits down is made ſo welcome, nor that Chriſt gives his dainties to ſtrangers, or enemies; many may come and receive, and yet only feed upon a piece of Bread and Drink, two or three ſpoonfuls of Wine, and and really, if this were all the Proviſion that a Saint were to have, it were ſcarce worth ſo ſolemn an Invication: It's poſſible to come thither to eat and drink your own Damnation, and inſtead of an affectionate Treatment to be diſmiſſed with a Friend, how comeſt thou hither, not having on the Wedding Garment. Yet the ſenſible Hungry burthened Souls, notwithſtanding all their fears may come, nay, they muſt, and its little leſs than giving aſcent to Sathans callumnies which he raiſeth againſt Chriſt and his wayes to forbear; its too ungrateful a Contempt of one of the exceilent Cordials which the great Phyſcian hath provided for the recovering, and ſtrengthning of his poor ſwooning Patients, and in a word, its too like a fooliſh, being fond of our Sin and Sorrow, when we refuſe the comfor-

fortable

fortable Appointment; which the Goodneſs, and and Wiſdom of a Father, the Love, and Tenderneſs of a Husband, and the Sweetneſs of the Holy Spirit, doth ſo freely offer, perſwade, command; the Spirit ſaith, come, and the Bridegroom ſaith come, and why ſhould not he that is a thirſt come thankfully, humbly, ſpeedily. Well now poor weary Soul, what haſt thou to ſay againſt the excellency of reſt? Poor ſick Soul, what Fault canſt thou find with Eaſe, Health, and Strength? Poor guilty Soul, that looks upon thy ſelf as next to condemned: What harm would a Pardon, and the publique ſealing of it do thee? Who would think that man hungry, that had rather eat Aſhes than Bread; who would judge that perſon thirſty, that had rather drink Gall Tears and Wormwood, than the clear refreſhing Streams that come from that Rock the Lord Chriſt: Will you, never believe that Chriſt invites you, look into the Note that he hath ſent out his ſervants with, whoſe Name do I read there: Who are the perſons that are invited? of what Rank and Quality? Are they the Great ones of the World? Are they the Learned? Are they the Proud, and Self-conceited Phariſes? Why, I find none of theſe in the Writing? Who are they then that may come with Confidence to draw water out of theſe Wells of Conſolation. The Poor in Spirit, the Hungry, the Sick, the Wounded, the Loſt; theſe are Pools of *Betheſdah*, where the Angel of the Covenant doth oft deſcend, and move the Waters; and where is it fitter for the Impotent to lye, than there where they can not miſs of a Doctor, a viſit, or Cure. What do you think of this

this poor Heart; are they but flouriſhes, do I ſpeak, or doth Chriſt, and if he ſay it, who can diſannul it, will he, can he be worſe than his word; I know he is uſually better, but never ſhort of his Promiſe; will you Credit, the Experiences of Chriſtians, have they not ſeen, have they not known, have they not felt; yea, have not all your Spiritual ſences, been exerciſed, and refreſhed at that time when the King hath been at his Table? One is ready to ſay, if ever I could have left the World at a minnutes warning, and have ſkept immediately into Eternity, it was then when mine eyes beheld the King in his beauty, when he held out his Golden Scepter unto me, aud took me into his Imbraces. Yea, when the Miniſters of Chriſt preſented me with the Jewels and Bracelets, and ask't me whither I would go with them to Chriſt; my Soul made a ſpeedy and thankful reply, my Heart and Love is his, and his will I be for ever. O that I were once ſafe in his Armes! O that I might live with him, and never part! O when ſhall it be! *Come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* I remember I have heard it reported of that Reverend, and Holy man of God Maſter *Allen* (who lived at as high a rate as moſt on this ſide Perfection and Glory) that he was before he died in a very rare ſeraphique raptures of Joy and Love, ſo that he could not chuſe but burſt out into unuſual Expreſſions of Praiſe, ſuch as theſe: Ten thouſand praiſes to the King of Saints, for the freeneſs, and riches of his Grace to any poor Soul; let every corner of Heaven ring with *Hallelujahs*; let all the Angels help me to praiſe thy incomparable, lovely, and glorious Jeſus. O the Joys that he feaſts my Soul with!

who

who would not be Christs Servant! never did I feel such transcendent, pure Divine Joys, except at the Lords Table; and then indeed I have been oft so raised in Spirit, that my Nature, except sustained by a Miracle, could scarce bear a greater weight of Comfort. O the unspeakable vast satisfying Pleasures that Christ in that Ordinance doth afford some of his sometimes! I have heard another dear Brother say, that for some years together, he scarce ever failed of some notable Token of Love at that great Ordinance. But I would not, instead of comforting, and incouraging the poor Saint, bring him into greater fears and dispondings: Judge not therefore that this is the portion of all Gods Children, nor of any at all times to have such large Discoveries as these. Heaven is reserved for Heaven; some have a single Messe, some a double, some five times more than their Brethren; let all be thankful if the great *Joseph* instead of a Prison, give a Feast, and in it make himself known to us to be our brother; let's love him, and admire his condescention, and be ready to wonder that he doth so much for us, rather than repine that he doth more for others. If thou hast some drawings, and longings, and mournings after Christ, and a deep sence of thy hardness, unbelief, and worldliness be thankful; it may be this is more wholsome entertainment, and fitter for the present Temper and Constitution of thy Soul than those Flagons of Wine, perhaps they would fly up into thy head, and make thee giddy, proud, and wanton; if thou be but well wrought, poor, and hungry, thou wilt be thankful for a little; and a Crumb that falls from the Table to an humble

Soul

Soul, is better Intertainment then it knows it deſerves, or could without a Miracle of Kindneſs have expected; miſtake me not as if I would have Chriſtians ſit down ſatisfied with little or no comfort at that Ordinance; no, tis quite another deſigne that I am carrying on; tis only a hint to quell Ingratitude, my great work at preſent is, to quicken diligence in Preparation, and to raiſe the Saints Valuation of that Ordinance, and his Expectations from Chriſt in it. I ſay again, Chriſt uſually proportions his Intertainment to the diligent, faithful, humble preparations of the Soul to meet him; they that trim their Lamps, and have Oyl in them, are moſt like to meet that Bridegroom with Joy; he that hath on the Wedding Garment, can't miſs of a Welcom, and the good and faithful Servant is moſt likely to have the Maſters commendation, and to enter into his Joy. But more or leſs, every ſincere Soul at one time or another, will meet with Refreſhment at that Supper, and amongſt all the rare Diſhes that are ſerved up, no queſtion but ſome will be ſutable (if not all) to a hungry, Spiritual Stomach. I can ſcarce leave this ſweet Subject, the time draws nigh, and the Servants are ſent out to invite, and thou, O my Soul, art one of the Gueſt that art bidden. Hark, methinks I hear a Royal Proclamation, *Whoſoever is a thirſt, let him come and drink of the Waters of Life freely*: Methinks the ſilver Trumpet of the Goſpel, and Divine Love ſounds a Jubile: Methinks the Air ecchoes with a ſtrange Harmony, ſomewhat like that, *Luke* 2. 14. *Glory to God in the higheſt, and on Earth, Peace, Good will towards men*. Don't the very Heavens ring with theſe Bleſſed Words, *A*

Saviour

Saviour! a Saviour! a mighty Redeemer! a Pardon! a Pardon! Liberty! Liberty! a glorious Liberty! and again the Congregations of the Saints, and Redeemed ones cry, *Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.* I had thought to have done, but the Feaſt is ſo ſweet I muſt fall on again: Here no Surfeiting, the more I feed, the more hungry, and yet the more ſatisfied, the more delighted: Here's nothing but Fulneſs, Sweetneſs, and Love may be written upon every Diſh; and Royal noble everlaſting Bounty, may be proclaimed before every Courſe: All the diſmal Bonds are thrown in Cancelled; all our Debts forgiven and paid, the great Surety ſhews the Acquittance long ſince granted in the Court of Heaven, now its given in to the Court of Conſcience. The bloody War is concluded by a happy and firm Peace: God is no longer a Judge an Enemy, but now the Soul hears ſuch words, Friend, Father, Husband. The Challenges of Law, Conſcience, and Sathan, are now ſilenced, the Inditements againſt the Soul are all quaſhed, the Soul may walk now at liberty, and fear no Arreſt; who can lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect, its Chriſt that juſtifies, who can condemn, Chriſt ſaith it, ſwears it, ſeals it, it cannot but be true, why art thou then caſt down poor Soul, and why art thou diſquieted? Chriſt hath made a bleſſed exchange, with thee he hath drank the bitter Cup, and offers thee the ſweet, which is ſpiced with Grace and Love; Chriſt both purchaſed the Crown for thee, and taken the Croſs to himſelf, he took the Rags, and gives thee the Robes, he became Poor, that thou mayſt become Rich, he emptied him-

himſelf that thou mayeſt be filled; he was eſteemed as nothing, that thou mighteſt from worſe than nothing, poſſeſs all things; and what now remains, but that with the greateſt Gratitude, you accept of Chriſt's offer whenſoever he invites thee to his Table? what doth better become thee then the deepeſt reſentment of the higheſt kindneſs, and a grateful cloſure with all the overtures of Divine Goodneſs? O happy are the people that are admitted to this Intimacy! happy are the Souls that know the worth, the uſe of this Ordinance, and make it their buſineſs wiſely to improve it. O what an opportunity have ſuch of Chriſt here! what Requeſt may they not then have granted! and when Chriſt is giving, what will he, what can he deny them which have his heart already? I have been the more large in this, becauſe it was the particular requeſt of one of my Brethren a Reverend Miniſter, that in the next Edition, I would not forget that Ordinance in which God uſually doth moſt ſignally diſcover his Love to his people.

IIII. DIRECTION.

If you would get acquainted with God, get Chriſt along with you, when you go to God. You are like to ſpeed no way ſo ſoon as this way; nay, let me ſay, all that I have ſaid before ſignifies nothing at all without this. There is no Name under Heaven, by which we can be ſaved, but by the Name of Chriſt; and whoſoever comes to the Father by him, he will in no wiſe caſt out. God can't deny his own Son any thing,

he can never forget that great undertaking of his, by which he glorified his Fathers infinite Juſtice, and infinite Love, and did him more honour than all the Saints and Angels in the world. His Son, the Lord Chriſt, hath ſuch an intereſt in his Father, that he can as ſoon deſpiſe his own honour, as to refuſe any requeſt that is preſented to him, by his Son. If Chriſt come to him, and ſay, Father, here is a poor ſinner that I have undertaken for, and that flew to me for refuge, Look upon him for my ſake; why the Fathers Arms are preſently open; he will not reject his Sons Petitions. The truth of it is, this is the greateſt cauſe of the miſcarriage of poor Creatures, that go about to do that themſelves, and by themſelves, which they can never do alone. They go to God all alone, and no Wonder then they meet with a frown; for there is no Name under Heaven, by which a man can be ſaved, but by the Name of Chriſt; and out of Chriſt, God is a conſuming fire; & there is but one *Mediator* the man Chriſt Jeſus. And there is but one Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous. That which *Joſeph* ſaid of *Benjamin*, God ſaith of Chriſt, except you bring *Benjamin* along with you, you ſhall not ſee my Face, except you bring Chriſt along with you, you ſhall not ſee my Face. There is a notable ſtory which is commonly by Divines applied to our preſent purpoſe, and that not without good reaſon; it is concerning a Law among the *Moloſſians*, where whoſoever came to the King with his Son in his Arms, ſhould be accepted into favour, let his fault be what it will. So let a man be what he will before, yet if ye come to God in Chriſt, he can't be thruſt away.

O therefore if thou wouldeſt have any countenance from God, beg for a Chriſt to bear thee company into the preſence of God. I will tell you this for your comfort, Chriſt hath a loving deſign in his heart to do ſuch offices of kindneſs for poor Malefactors that underſtand ſomething of their danger. If you ſee your ſelf loſt for want of reconciliation with God, Chriſt he ſtands ready to lead you into his Fathers houſe. O did you but know how willing he is to bring undone loſt Penitents to God, it would make your heart leap within you for joy. Behold, how oft he asks after you; what doth that ſinner mean to ruine himſelf? I would with all my heart bring him out of all thoſe perplexities, and undertake to make God and him Friends, if he would be but ruled by me; and upon this account he ſends up and down many hundreds of his Miniſters to tell ſinners as much, that they may not be undone everlaſtingly. Doth not Wiſdom call? doth not Chriſt plead the Caſe, and expoſtulate with ſinners? and who would not, that hath any underſtanding at all of his ſtate out of Chriſt, with all poſſible thankfulneſs be encouraged to accept of his kindneſs? Chriſt hath done as much as this comes to already for many Millions, and his Father never ſaid to him, Son, why do you trouble your ſelf and me with ſo many of theſe wretched Creatures, let them alone to take their courſe. Where did God ever expreſs himſelf in this manner? did he ever take it unkindly that his Son ſhould every day bring ſuch Gueſts to his houſe, and be continually begging one Boon or other for them, or putting up ſome Petitions upon their account, or pleading with his Father for

them when they do offend. Is God displeased at such work as this? is he not as willing to receive such, as his Son is to bring them? and both Father and Son more willing to save the sinner than he is to be saved? O kindness! Christ loves the sinner better than he loves himself! and as I said before, so I say again, the Father doth not grutch any thing that Christ gives, or doth for poor sinners. The Righteousness of Christ, it is that Wedding Garment, in which we may sit at the Kings Table, and are welcome; these are the Robes of our elder Brother, in which we can't miss of our Fathers Blessing. O how many poor Creatures have walked in the dark many years, because they have not been brought off from themselves, but have sought that by themselves, which is to be sought only by Christ; because they have looked for that in the Law, which is to be found only in the Gospel; and no wonder their business went on so slowly, when they went the quite contrary way to work. When any comes to God without Christ, they come like *Simon Magus*, with their own money in their hand to buy a great Commodity, which is not to be purchased with such kind of Coyn. If you come to God through Christ, you may come with boldness to the Throne of Grace; but if you come without him, you do but come with Madness upon the point of the flaming Sword.

V. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, come much where he is wont to be, frequent his houſe, lye always at the Doors of Wiſdom, engage much in his Ordinances. This was that courſe that *David* took when he wanted Gods company, away he goes to the houſe of God; and, O what earneſtneſs doth he uſe when the doors of the Lords Tabernacle were ſhut, to get them open again? what moan doth he make when he was for ſome time ſequeſtred by his enemies, from the enjoyment of God in his publick Ordinances? *As the Hart pants after the water-brooks, ſo did his ſoul pant after God, the living God.* O when ſhould he appear before him? when ſhould he again behold the out-goings of God in his Sanctury, as ſometimes he had? *How amiable are thy tabernacles*, ſaith he, *O Lord God of Hoſts! And one thing have I deſired, and that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in thy houſe, and ſee thee, and enquire in thy tabernacle, Pſal.*42. *Pſal.*48. *Pſal.*27.4. He thought God was like to be found no where ſo ſoon as at his own houſe; he was ſure he was never from home. *David* can never forget what uſage, and entertainment he was wont to have there, and that this great Friend was uſed to have a ſtanding Table, an open Houſe, and that when his Gueſts were ſet, he would come and bid them welcome; eat O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. See therefore that you get into that part of Gods houſe where he doth moſt frequently come, get under the moſt powerful Miniſtery; O hear the Word with all the Reverence, Attention,

and affection that you can for your ſoul; miſs not any opportunities that God puts into your hand, leaſt that ſhould be the time in which you might have met with God; Lye at the pool of *Bethesda*, and wait for the moving of the Waters; ſet your ſelves as in the houſe of God, and remember, though you ſee not God, that he is always preſent in all places, but he is there more eſpecially preſent where his people meet together to attend upon him in his own Ordinances? Wherefore when you come to hear the Word, ſet your ſelf as in the preſence of God, and hear as for your life and ſoul, *Deut.* 32. 46. *Set your hearts to all the words that you ſhall hear; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life,* Iſa. 55, 2, 3. *Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your ſoul delight it ſelf in fatneſs. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your ſoul ſhall live; and I will make an everlaſting Covenant with you, even the ſure mercies of David,* He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the mighty *Jehovah* is ſpeaking to his ſoul. Wherefore I ſay it again, ſet your ſelf as in the very immediate preſence of God; and when you hear a word that you are very nearly concerned in, put up ſuch a ſhort Ejaculation as this. Now Lord, ſtrike this hard heart of mine; now Lord come in I beſeech thee; O that this word might be the key which might open my heart for the King of Glory to come in! O command thy loving kindneſs this day to break into my ſoul! O that this might be the day in which Salvation might come unto my houſe! O that this might be the man that might be my Spiritual Father, that this might be the Meſſenger one among a thouſand, that may bring me good tidings! O

that

that this might be the ſentence, that this might b the hour of Love! O that this might be the day that I may have in everlaſting remembrance! O that I might preſently without any more delay, ſet out for *Canaan!* Cry out with as much earneſtneſs as that poor man did, who brought his poſſeſſed child before Chriſt; O Lord I have brought my unbeliving heart before thee to cure, it expoſes me a thouſand times to unſpeakable hazards; but Lord, if thou wilt but ſpeak the word, it ſhall be diſpoſſeſſed: I would believe, Lord help my unbelief. I have brought my hard heart before thee, Lord ſoften it, and let me not go from time to time with theſe dreadful diſeaſes hanging about me, to infect, and undoe my ſelf and others. O melt me, O Lord, melt me, and let me have ſuch a look from thee, as *Peter* once had, which made him to go out and weep bitterly. But I ſhall ſpeak a little more of this nature under another Direction.

VI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, you muſt get acquainted with ſome of his Friends, and they will do all they can, and be glad of it too, to help you to be acquainted with him, they will not ſpare to give you their utmoſt aſſiſtance in this great buſineſs. And when they ſhall hear you asking, what you ſhall do to know God, they are glad at their Heart, and will not be at quiet till they have got thee home with them to their Fathers Houſe; they watch for your Soul, and no greater Joy than to help forward ſuch a work as this, then to be imployed any way in the

ſervice of your Souls. They are glad when they hear any ſaying, let us go to the houſe of the Lord, and asking the way to *Zion*, with their faces thither-ward. O! Chriſtians ſociety, good company is of exceeding uſe; one good ſervant in a houſe, the whole Family may fare the better for him. *Laban* and *Potiphar*, though ignorant enough in Spirituals, could not but obſerve this, that the Lord bleſſed their Families, for the ſake of one godly Servant. I do not ſpeak this only with reſpect to Temporals, becauſe of that Diligence and Faithfulneſs in their places, that Religion will put them upon; but with reſpect to Spirituals, they will be dropping ſomething that may tend to the awakening, and convincing of their ſleepy, unbelieving, ignorant companions: they have an inward principle which puts them upon communicating what Grace they have received; they know the more they impart to others, the more they ſhall have themſelves; they have a Compaſſion for Souls, and would fain have as many as they can along with them to Heaven; they will be teaching little Children to Pray, and Inſtilling ſomething that the very Babes may ſet forth Gods Praiſes, and they will be pleading with God for them. But this only by the by. Now if thoſe that are gracious, endeavour what they can to bring in thoſe that are open enemies; how much more will they be ready to give all the help they can to you that earneſtly deſire it? Now when any one comes to this paſs, that he ſees a difference between the godly and the wicked, and to ſay that the righteous is more excellent than his Neighbour, and to have an earneſt deſire to aſſociate themſelves with them, it

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is a very great ſign that God hath an intention to do ſuch a Soul good. Wherefore if you would be brought to the knowledge of God, go ſpeedily to them that know him well; and they will tell you great things of him, and how they came firſt acquainted with him, and how this acquaintance hath been kept; they will tell you where they firſt met him, they will give you to underſtand, that at ſuch and ſuch a time, when they little thought of God, they were ſtrangely brought acquainted with him. When they came (out of Faſhion, or curioſity, or to laugh at him that taught them, or it may be to pick ſome Quarrel with him) to hear ſuch a man; they were made to ſee what they never took any great notice of before, that they were in an undone condition by Nature, and that except Chriſt would pitty them, there was no remedy, but to Hell they muſt go; whereas before they thought themſelves as ſafe as could be: But then they ſaw that it was no light matter to be out of Chriſt, and Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*. After this, they were made to underſtand ſomething of Chriſts undertaking for poor loſt ſinners, and they heard of his exceeding willingneſs to receive the chiefeſt of ſinners, and that then they began to ſee an excellency in his love, and goodneſs, and to be ſomewhat more taken with the kindneſs of Chriſt than ever they were before, and they felt ſome longings after the precious Jeſus, O that they had but a Chriſt for their Souls! and that after this they were by the Spirit of God, in ſome meaſure enabled to caſt themſelves at the feet of Chriſt for mercy, and that upon his own terms, knowing that if mercy

came

came not that way to them, they muſt ſink for ever; and that upon this act of recumbency after they had for ſome time waited upon God in the way of his ordinances, they began to taſte and reliſh the things of God, and at laſt they met him whom their Souls loved. Inquire of them, I ſay, and they will talk thus to you, and tell you alſo, that there was a time wherein they were fooliſh, diſobedient, and unto every good Work Reprobate, and miſerably neglectful of their Souls, that they did not at all mind their Eternal welfare, but made light of Chriſt, made a mock of ſin, and made nothing of Eternal Damnation. And they will direct, and encourage you alſo. Let me tell you, they have an intereſt in God, and their prayers for you may be more advantagious than you are aware of. Yet I would not that you ſhould make Chriſts of the Saints, nor forget what is the work of the Mediator alone. Saints are to be valued, but Chriſt is to be valued infinitely more. Get acquainted with ſome warm rare experienced Chriſtian, and make him your boſom Friend, and obſerve him, and you ſhall ſee much of the beauty of Religion ſhining in him, and you ſhall ſee how chearfully, and comfortably he walks; now ask him what his practice is, and go you, and do likewiſe; have a care of harbouring ill thoughts of the people of God, or for the ſake of one Hypocrite of cenſuring a thouſand ſincere Ones. Judg you whether this be juſt and equal doing? How would you like it, if one that bears ſome Relation to you ſhould do ſome vile abominable thing, and bring himſelf to an untimely end, and people ſhould ſay all the whole Family is like him? though it

may

may be you are grieved to the very heart, that ſuch a thing ſhould be done by any in the world, much more by any that bears any kind of Relation to your ſelf. I tell you, as contemptibly as the world ſpeak of the godly, they are not ſuch odious Creatures as they are repreſented to be. The Saints they are not Troublers, but Peace-makers, they love to make peace between man and man, and what in them lies alſo between God and man: Your converſe with ſuch as fear the Lord, will make you like them, at leaſt they will endeavour as much. (*Ar. Epict.* l. 3. c. 16.) He ſpoke no untruth, who ſaid, *That company is of an aſſimulating Nature. A living coal laid to a heap of dead ones may kindle them all; but they are more like, except it be blown up, to put the live one quite out;* therefore ſaith the ſaid Author, *You muſt be very cautious of your company.* It is ſtored of *Socrates*, that he had a rare Art of making his familiar Friends of his mind. Some active Chriſtians take as much pains to make their familiars of Chriſts mind, *Prov.* 13. 20. *He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall yet be wiſer, but a Companion of Fools ſhall be deſtroyed*, Prov. 10. 10, 21, 33. *The tongue of the juſt is as choice Silver, but the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the Righteous feed many, but Fools die for want of wiſdom. The lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked ſpeaketh froward things.* Such as theſe will do what they can to make you out of love with ſin, and in love with God. Such as theſe will from their own experience be ſetting forth the goodneſs of God, and tell you that which may ſtand you inſtead as long as you live; it may be they may tell you, that when God began firſt to

work

work upon their Soul, he was pleaſed to make uſe of the particular Application, and the ſpiritual converſation of ſuch a Chriſtian Relation; and when God came in with comfort, and ſpake peace, ſuch a one lead them to ſuch a promiſe, which was like a Cordial to their fainting Soul. When they were abroad (they will tell you) and were neceſſitated to the company of them which were ſtrangers to the life of Religion; and were at ſuch a time troubled with horrible Temptations; that they were in a wilderneſs condition, and thought that never any that walked Heaven-ward, could be in the like ſtate; but now when they got acquainted with the people of God, they found, that as Face anſwered Face in a Glaſs, ſo their experience, and the experience of many of the dear Children of God was exactly alike; and that, that which they thought none in the world could parallel, they find that moſt of the Chriſtians that they meet with, know as well as themſelves, and at the firſt hearing are able to go on with the ſtory before them, ſo that they have ſometimes wondred how any one living ſhould know their Hearts and Thoughts ſo well, to whom they did not communicate them. I think it not altogether impertinent here to inſert an obſervation of mine own. I remember when I was once ſpeaking concerning the duty of Chriſtians in Relation to their Unconverted Friends, and urging them upon doing what they could for God and Souls, in the places where God had ſet them: in ſpeaking to this ſubject, I ſaid, that there was not the meaneſt Chriſtian, but might be an inſtrument of the Converſion of a Soul: Upon this, I rehearſed a couple of Experiences that I had

of

of two perſons, ſtrangers one to the other, who gave this account of their Converſion; they were upon the matter both alike, and therefore I ſhall tell but one of them, which take as followes. There was a Poor, Civil, yet very Carnal Creature, a Servant in a Religious Family, who did from his Soul abhor the Spiritual Converſation of thoſe in the Family, inſomuch that he was reſolved to run away from his Service, he was ſo weary of ſuch doings: But one Night, hearing a ſtrange ſound ſomewhere, he aroſe out of his Bed, and went to liſten what was the matter: upon which, he heard one diſtinctly praying on the other ſide of the wall, he ſtill hearkning, heard one praying very earneſtly for him (who did not know but he might be aſleep) and opening the condition of his Soul ſo particularly, and with ſo much Tenderneſs, that he was wonderfully awakened to think that one that he hated ſhould ſo much love him, and pitty his Soul, and to conſider how it was poſſible any one in the world ſhould know his Thoughts ſo well as that perſon did, who prayed for him; upon this he began to be very much ſtartled to think of his condition, concluding thus, ſurely I am in a lamentable ſtate, and they ſee it, or elſe they would never do as they do; they are praying for me, when I am aſleep, they love me when I hate them; upon this the man was very much troubled, and his trouble daily increaſed, till he was forced to open his condition to the perſon, who had been praying for him, which was a poor Maid-ſervant: upon which the work of Regeneration was carryed on very ſweetly, and the man became an excellent Chriſtian, whereas the Inſtrument that

God

God uſed in this great work was but a poor ſervant. Now when I rehearſed this thing which was the condition of two, as I ſaid before, a third perſon ſtood by (whom I never ſaw in my life before) who fell a ſweating for trouble, that any of his Friends ſhould tell ſuch a thing of him, to me, and thought I had meant himſelf in all the particulars, though I heard not a word of the man before in my life. This by the by, I could not but hint this for the encouragement of parents to get their children into Families that are really Religious, and to encourage all to aſſociate themſelves to ſuch as fear the Lord. You ſee by what hath been ſpoken, that acquaintance with the people of God, may be of great uſe for the bringing the Soul acquainted with God.

VII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God; entertain all the Meſſengers that he ſends to you kindly. When God calls, anſwer; and when he ſends any of his ſervants to you, bid them welcome; let the feet of thoſe which bring glad tidings be beautiful in your eye; do not think much if they deal plainly and roundly with you, know that it is out of love to your Souls (God is their witneſs) they ſee that your condition requires it, & that a man in your ſtate is not to be jeſted with. The Lord knows that they take little pleaſure in grieving of people; they do it that you may rejoyce for ever; they watch for your Souls, and therefore you muſt account them worthy of double Honour. But of all the Meſſengers that God ſends, have the greateſt care of dealing unkindly

kindly with, and grieving his ſpirit; when you have any motions upon your Soul by the Spirit, labour to cheriſh them with all the care and tenderneſs that you can: Turn not Convictions away with, I am not at leiſure; or I will hear you of theſe things when I have a more convenient ſeaſon: but as ſoon as you find your heart begin to relent, cry out unto the Lord, and ſay, O Lord I beſeech thee, carry on thy work effectually upon my Soul! O that I may have through work! O let not theſe convictions wear off from my Soul, till they end in a real Converſion! O let me not prove but a Half-Chriſtian! Any thing in the world, Lord, ſo that I may but be made a Chriſtian in good earneſt! O let me not return with the Dog to his Vomit, and with the Sow that is waſhed, to her Wallowing in the Mire! Deliver me, O God, from ſinning away theſe things, and getting into a cold World, and from ſhaking off all, leaſt I prove worſe than ever, and my latter end be more miſerable than my beginning. Labour to be very curious in the taking notice of Gods abſence or preſence; and when you find your Soul raiſed in any duty, and your Heart ſomewhat drawn out after God, then be ſure to own Gods goodneſs, and bleſs the Lord for it; Record his kindneſs, forget not his mercy, paſs not over ſuch great things in ſilence. Little do men think what a hazard they run, when they quench the Motions of God's Spirit. You may read in the 5. *Cant.* how dearly the Spouſe had like to have paid for ſuch an unkindneſs? What, ſhall God ſend his ſpirit to viſit you? Shall the infinite Majeſty ſo far condeſcend as to knock at your Door, and will not you open?

Why

why then, you may thank your ſelves if he never knock more. But if you will now open to him, he will come into you, and ſup with you, and you ſhall ſup with him.

VIII. DIRECTION.

Seek his Acquaintance moſt earneſtly if you would have it. O why do men and women jeſt with matters of the greateſt weight and importance in the world? What do people mean to play with their Souls, the wrath of God, and damnation? O ſinners, have you nothing elſe to play with? No lower matters to ſport with? Believe it, Sirs, Heaven and Glory are not got with ſitting ſtill with our Hands in our pockets. We think it worth the while to riſe early, and to ſit up late, to get an earthly Eſtate; we count it no fooliſh thing for a man to be very diligent about his Worldly Affairs. The poor Country-man Plows and Sows, Harrows, Weeds, Reaps, Inns, Threſheth, and a great deal more, before he can eat his bread: and ſhall we look for a rich crop, and do nothing at all but eat, and drink, and ſleep? Is this the way to be rich? is this the way to be happy for ever? If you intend to do any thing in Religion to any purpoſe, you muſt buckle to your buſineſs at another ges rate than moſt of the Profeſſors of the World do. We muſt take as much pains about our Souls, as men do about their Bodies or Eſtates. Is there any comparison between the Soul and the Body; between a Worldly Eſtate, and an Heavenly Inheritance? Hath a man more reaſon to look after tricking up his body that muſt Die, or look after the adorning

adorning of his ſoul that muſt live ſomewhere for ever? Which are matters of the greateſt conſequence, eating and drinking, and pampering the fleſh, and taking our pleaſure; or looking after Life, Salvation, and Eternal Joy? Do you think that the Scripture ſaith in vain, *That we muſt ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate?* Is it a bare ſeeking that will ſerve the turn? Will a *Lord have mercy upon me*, and bowing the knee, do as well as the greateſt ſeriouſneſs and diligence in the World? Do you think that God will be put off with the skin and garbage inſtead of ſacrifice, with the ſhell inſtead of the kernel, with chaff inſtead of the corn? Doth not Chriſt ſay, *That many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able?* O why do not lazy Profeſſors read the Scriptures with trembling? Let all thoſe that are angry with us for putting them upon making religion their buſineſs, and uſing all diligence *to make their calling and election ſure*, Read that one Scripture over again, *Luk.* 13.24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*, &c. It was Chriſt who ſpoke that word. If we tell you of the danger of a formal Religion, you will ſoon fall upon us as Enemies to your peace, and thoſe which impoſe too much ſtrictneſs upon you: We therefore do here produce our Commiſſion for what we ſay, or rather we deſire you but to read your ſelves what Chriſt ſpoke, as touching this matter. O it might juſtly make a Chriſtians heart to ake, to think how many thouſands of Profeſſors will be diſowned by Chriſt in that day, who will make many fair pleas for themſelves, and pretend a great deal of acquaintance with him. Conſider I

beſeech you, here is no fear of Exceſs; never any man in the World that was too ſolicitous about his Salvation, never any man took too much pains for Heaven. Awake, O ſleeper, what meaneſt thou? ariſe, and call upon thy God. If you make any thing of the loſs of a Soul, look about you; if you think the wrath to come conſiderable, be ſerious; if you would not be burnt by the fire of his Indignation, you muſt take hold of his ſtrength, and make peace with him, and God will be at peace with you, *Iſa.* 27.5. It is not without cauſe, that the Prophet doth complain, *Iſa.* 64.7. *There is none that calls upon thy Name, that ſtirs up himſelf to take hold on thee. There is none that calls upon Gods Name!* One would think that that were ſtrange; What none call upon his Name, when ſo many of them made many Prayers, as you have it in the firſt of *Iſaiah?* What did they nothing but look upon one another, when they had their Solemn Aſſemblies? Did they ſay nothing to God, when they came before him? Did they do nothing at all in that 58. of *Iſaiah*, when they are ſaid to ſeek him daily, when they ſeemed to delight in his way? Yet in Gods eſteem, all this goes for nothing at all, this prayer is no prayer, this is only wording of it with God. But prayer it is another kind of thing, it is the ſtirring up of the Soul, and awakening all it's ſtrength to wreſtle with God, to lay hold upon God, and to prevail with the Almighty; and where are ſuch as theſe to be found, who is this that engages his heart in the ſervice of God? It is one thing to engage the tongue, and another thing to engage the heart. Men come to pray with a common Spirit, and are many times weary of

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the work before they have well begun it; what they do, they do it lifeleſsly: They can follow their worldly Imployments with life and delight: They have Male in their flock, but that's too good for God; a lame, blind, ſtarved weak thing muſt ſerve his turn: And is this the way to have the bleſſing? Are ſuch as theſe like to have any thanks for their kindneſs? Let them try how any of their Friends would take ſuch a preſent. Now would you have the Bleſſing of Acquaintance with God, you muſt wreſtle for it, and not let God go without it: You muſt be *Fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*; you muſt *fight the good fight of Faith, and lay hold on Eternal Life*: You muſt graſp about Chriſt as a man that is a drowning would graſp any thing that were thrown out to ſave him: You muſt uſe *all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*: You *muſt work out your Salvation with fear and trembling*: You muſt *ſeek for Wiſdom as for Silver, and ſearch for her as for hid Treaſure. Then ſhall you underſtand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledg of God.* What excellent thing is there, that is got without pains? Whoever came to be an Exquiſite curious Artiſt in any skil whatever, that never ſerved an Apprentiſhip to it, nor at the leaſt gave his mind to it? where is there a famous Phyſitian that never ſtudied in his life? Who gets a Victory by ſleeping and careleſſeneſs? Who expects to have riches drop into his mouth, when he goes all the ways that can be to make himſelf a beggar? Doth the Husbandman look for a good Crop without plowing or ſowing? Why then, ſhould we expect ſuch great things as Heaven, Eternal happineſs, and the favour of God, with-

out looking after them. Whatſoever the lazy formal profeſſor may ſay, the Kingdom of Heaven is not obtained thus: there muſt be running, watching, fighting, conquering, holding faſt, holding out, and all little enough; it requires all the ſtrength of thy ſoul to engage in this great work; it requires ſome reſolution to do ſuch a work, as every Chriſtian muſt do, or elſe his Religion ſignifies little. Further, it calls for ſome time too, it is not a thing to be minded, now and then by the by, between ſleep and wake, when the Devil and the World have had as much ſervice as they call for. Were it for your bodies that I were now pleading; were you like to get any great matter in the world by following of my directions; could you be ſhew'd a way how to get a great eſtate, honours, and long life, I am verily perſwaded a few words might prevail much. Why, if you will believe the word of God, I am telling you of other kind of things then theſe be, greater matters by far; and yet how little are Men and Women affected? As if we ſpoke but in jeſt always, when we ſpoke about things that did concern Souls! How little time do men ſpend in their inquiry into theſe things? Ask *Epictetus* (*Ench.* c. 63.) And he will tell you that it is a ſign of a low Soul; to beſtow much time upon thy body, and the thoughts of it, and little upon the Soul, to be long eating, and long drinking, and long a dreſſing, and ſhort in prayer, ſhort in the thoughts of the Soul, and ſhort in the ſervice of God; and that it is a ſign of a baſe degenerate ſpirit to be very curious about toys, and inconſiderable trifles, and to be negligent about matters of the greateſt importance, to ſlubber o-

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ver the great works of Religion with the greateſt ſlightneſs. Remember, O man, thy great work, it is to take care of thy Soul, to look after a Companion, a Friend for thy Soul, to get food and cloathing for thy Soul, that that famiſh not with hunger and cold. To be indifferent in all externals is the greateſt prudence; but to be indifferent about Spirituals and Eternals is the greateſt madneſs. We are all Souldiers, and muſt fight in ſuch a War wherein we muſt never lay down our Arms. The favour of God is worth the ſtriving for, it is as much as Heaven and Glory is worth. If your eſtate or life lay at ſtake, would you not be willing to uſe all the intereſt you could to make the Judg your friend? would you go up and down laughing as if you had nothing to do? would you eat and drink as merrily as ever, and ſay, it is but dying, it is but being a beggar, it is but the undoing of my wife and children? would you not look upon a man that ſhould argue at this rate to be little better than frantick? and I pray which is moſt conſiderable, the death of the body, or the death of the ſoul; the loſs of a temporal, or the loſs of an eternal inheritance. Moſt mens diligence in Temporals will condemn their negligence in Spirituals. Chriſt ſaid, *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of Heaven, & the righteouſneſs thereof*; but moſt men ſay, I will ſeek firſt the Earth, and the glory thereof; and if God will give me Heaven and happineſs after I have ſerved the Devil and the world as long as I can, I ſhall be contented to have it. No ſuch matter, never expect it, God muſt ſooner ceaſe to be, than to gratifie you in this. Wherefore do you think, did *David* fol-

low his work ſo cloſe? Why did all thoſe Noble Worthies in the Church of old take ſo much pains? Why ſhould they not much ſtick to venture eſtates, and lives too? Will you condemn them all as guilty of too much curioſity, and unneceſſary preciſeneſs? Do you think that their labour was in vain? Are all thoſe diſappointed who willingly parted with preſent things for future things? I muſt tell you, if you expect to ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of Heaven, you muſt do as they did. Heaven will not be obtained now upon any lower Term than then. Your Souls are as precious as their's, and Heaven will be as well worth your minding as theirs, and God will look upon you as well as upon them, if you will value his favour as they did. Never look to have God give you that which you will not thank him for. What do you ſay after all this? will you ſit down before your work is done? open thine eyes, and conſider what thou haſt to do, and then tell me if it be not the greateſt folly imaginable to be ſlight in theſe Affairs. O how can'ſt thou eat, or drink, or ſleep, whilſt thou haſt ſuch a great work to do which is undone! O give not ſleep to thine eyes, or ſlumber to thine eye-lids, but deliver thy ſelf from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. *Go to the* Ant *thou ſluggard: Conſider her ways, and be wiſe; which having no guide, over-ſeer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the Summer, and gathereth her meat in the Harveſt.* How long wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard? When wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep? *Yet a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of the hands to ſleep, ſo ſhall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

And

and will you now labour to get acquaintance with God, as you would to get food for your body? will you endeavour as much to make ſure of his love, as you would do to make ſure of a pardon, in caſe of the forfeiture of your life? If ſo, we have ſome hopes, the work may have ſome conſiderable iſſue.

IX. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, be much in expoſtulating the caſe with God, and in urging thoſe arguments which the Scripture doth afford you in ſuch a caſe. Take with you words, and come unto the Lord, and ſpread your requeſts before him, and ſay, *O Lord, thou haſt ſent thy ſervant the Miniſters, and haſt invited me to come unto thee, and thou offereſt peace and reconciliation, and to be acquainted with me. O God, I deſire from my ſoul, to come upon thy call, and would fain be acquainted with thee. I ſee my ſelf in an undone ſtate, while I am a ſtranger to thee: but, O Lord, I have a curſed baſe heart that keeps me back from thee, and I can't tell what in the world to do. O Lord, I beſeech thee help thy poor Creature to come unto thee, lead me by the hand, let thy goodneſs and love conſtrain me, conquer me by thy kindneſs; come Lord into my ſoul, and let me ſee thy face, & look upon thee till I am in love with thee. O why art thou as a ſtranger to me? wilt thou forſake me for ever? ſhall I be one of thoſe thine enemies which ſhall be ſlain before thy face? ſhall I be one of thoſe that ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings? O Lord, pity, pity, pity, for Chriſt his ſake, a poor creature that would fain love thee, & be acquainted with thee. I am convinced that I muſt be damned without thee, & come to thee*

of my self I cannot. O draw me! O carry me! O compel me! constrain me, make me willing in the day of thy power: I cannot get loose, my heart is too hard for me, my lusts are too strong for me, my temptations are too many for me to conquer of my self. O Lord help me. Turn me, and I shall be turned. Pluck my feet out of the snare, or I shall be utterly destroyed for ever. Forgive mine iniquity, make me a clean heart, make me thy servant. Tell God that thou hast heard of his goodness and mercy, and that the King of *Israel* is a merciful King; and that it is his nature to pitty. Say to him, O I am a poor undone creature, and will thou send me away without mercy? will the God of Grace send me away without Grace? hast thou not called me, O God? thy servants tell me so, O Lord speak and give me ears to hear; O Lord I am come in upon thy merciful Proclamation, and I desire to lay my self at thy feet; mercy Lord, mercy upon what terms thou pleasest. Didst thou not say in thy Word, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, and buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without price.* Have not thy servants pleaded with me to come? and hast thou not sent for me? O! a blessing, a blessing for me, even for me, O my father! Hast thou not a blessing for me? shall I be sent away as I came! O Lord, I come at thy word! Do not say unto me, Be gone out of my sight. I cannot go, I will not go; whither shall I go from thee? For thou hast the words of Eternal Life. Though I cannot say, Be just to me a Saint, yet I will say, Be merciful to me a sinner. You may read more in *R. A.* his first part of his *Vindiciæ Pietatis*, pag. 232. the whole Treatise is excellent. Plead the blood of Christ; you may safely

say

ſay, that if there be not enough in Chriſt to ſave you, you do not deſire Salvation; for in him there is all fulneſs. You may plead your own abſolute neceſſity. Tell God, that if ever poor creature in the world had need of mercy, you have; tell him that you are reſolved not to be content without his love. You may plead his promiſe, in which he hath ſaid, *That he will take away the heart of ſtone, and give a heart of fleſh; & that he will put his fear in our hearts, & write his laws in our inward parts.* You may plead alſo the power of God, whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf; and many ſuch like arguments, you may find in many places in the Scripture. But becauſe I have touched upon this before, I ſhall paſs this by.

X. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, look after it ſpeedily, defer not a moment, your enemy is marching on apace, you may be ſurprized, your ſoul is haſting upon it's Eternal ſtate, your glaſs is almoſt run, there are but a few ſands behind; therefore ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: Ere long it will be too late; wherefore what thou doſt, do quickly. What is the voyce both of Scripture and Providence? Doth not the Word of God ſay *Now*, and commend the preſent time above all. Acquaint *now* thy ſelf with him; Remember *now* thy Creatour; Turn *now* unto the Lord. Let a poor Heathen (*Epiſt. En.* c. 75.) ſhame you into greater ſpeed in this neceſſary work. I ſhall tranſlate his words into *Engliſh*: *How long*, ſaith he, *will you defer the looking after the*

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beſt things ? How long will you abuſe your reaſon ? Have you not heard ſuch Precepts which you ought to agree to, and you ſeemed very well to like of? What kind of Teacher is it that you ſtay for ? For whoſe coming do you defer before you will mend and turn ? You are come now to years of diſcretion (if I ſhould ſay you were not, you would be angry) if you will neglect and delay, and add one delay to another, if you will add one put off to another, and make one reſolution and purpoſe after another, and ſet one day after another, in which you will think of theſe things; conſider that all this will do you no good, for all your reſolutions and promiſes, for all that I ſee, you are like to die a common man ; therefore *now* live as a perfect growing man, and follow that which is moſt excellent unalterably. If any thing of difficulty intervene, remember that *now* is the time for you to ſhew what reſpect you have for your God and your ſoul. Remember the goal is not far off, and that *now* you muſt not falter, and that as you demean your ſelf *now*, it may be you may be happy or miſerable while you have a Being. This is the Language of that excellent Moraliſt. I add, what is it, O ſinner, that thou ſtayeſt for ? Is it for the day of Judgment ? would you be taught by flames, the worth of time ? You may then indeed learn ; but believe it, your knowledg and learning will do you little good ; you may then learn what it is to be miſerable. but you can't learn how to get out of it ; you will know what you have loſt, but then will never know how to repair your Loſſes. How many Thouſands of them which have ſet a day, in which they would return and repent, have ſet,

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and ſet, and ſet it again, and what with one thing or other they could not be at leaſure to repent till they came to Hell; and there indeed they have leiſure enough to repent, and they do repent too, if Hell-Repentance would do any thing: I believe that all that come there do repent and believe too more than they did while they were alive; but then it's too late. They that are now in thoſe dreadful Flames, many of them thought, it may be, of repenting before they died as well as you, and did juſt as you do. O that you would underſtand your ſelves before your ſtate be like theirs! how infinitely doth it concern you to improve time, and to comply with the preſent tender of mercy that are made to you: for ere long it may be too late for you too. O know this therefore, that *now* thy God makes thee a gracious offer of pardon; and if you refuſe *now*, this may be the laſt time, this may be the very caſt for Eternity. God may ſay before to morrow, *This night thy ſoul ſhall be required of thee.* Go to therefore, you that talk of trading for the great things of Eternity, I do not know when, thirty or forty years hence, Do you not know that your life is but a blaſt? When your breath goes out of your Noſtrils, you are not ſure that you ſhall draw it in again. What then do you mean to talk of delay? have you not ſtaid long enough already? conſider man what thou doſt. He that ſaith he will be good to morrow, he ſaith he will be wicked to day. And what if God ſhould ſay, thou ſhalt have the pleaſure of ſin to day & the ſorrow of ſin to morrow? Thou ſhalt be hardned to day, and damned to morrow? If your houſe were on fire, you would ſcarce ſay, I will go and

ſleep

ſleep four or five hours, and then I will riſe and call my Neighbours to help to quench it. If your Child were a drowning, you would ſcarce ſay, I muſt needs ſtay till I have drunk a flaggon or two more, and about half an hour hence it may be I may go and ſee whether I can get a Boat to help him out. If you were condemned to dye to morrow, you would ſcarce ſay, I will have Muſick, and Sack, and good company all night, and then I will ſend a Meſſenger if I can get one to ride a Hundred Mile to try whether he can get a Pardon for me. Yet thus for all the world thou doſt do in the great affairs of thy immortal Soul. O *the folly of man* (ſaith *Seneca*) *who thinks to begin to live, when a thouſand to one but he will be dead and rotten!* I may ſay, O the madneſs of ſinners, who make account to be looking after Heaven then, when it's likely their ſouls may be in Hell! Judge now whether this be wiſdom. Now you think time one of the pooreſt commodities in the world, it's a very drugg which lies upon your hand, a day or two, a week, a year is no great matter with you: but believe it, the caſe will be altered with a witneſs ere long. *Seneca* wondred when he heard ſome asking one of his friends for to ſpend two or three weeks with them, when he ſaw how eaſily the requeſt was granted, as if they asked as little as nothing, when they ask'd time of him: *Thus* (ſaith he) *one of the preciouſeſt things in the world is thrown away as little worth.* When you come to lie upon your death-bed, we ſhall have you have other thoughts of time: then, a world, if you had it, for one of thoſe hours, that you could not tell how to ſpend. You now ſtudy how to rob you ſelf of your precious time, you invent paſtimes,

paſtimes, not conſidering how ſwiftly time flies, and how much you will prize it before long. O remember no body can give you a moment of that time when you want it, that you are now ſo prodigal of. When time is paſt, if you would give a world to recal it, it could not be; If you would give thouſands for the renewing of this Leaſe, it would be refuſed. Therefore live quickly. Mans time runs away firſt. *Optima quæque dies miſeris mortalibus ævi, prima fugit . . . Seneca:* And then my Author Comments very bravely upon the whole verſe.

I think that Proverb, though it be an *Italian* one, is worth our remembring, *He that will lodge well at night, muſt ſet out betimes in the morning.* That which keeps us from living to day, is the thoughts of living to morrow, ſo that we loſe this day while we expect the next. *Comenius* ſpeaking of the *Tyger*, ſaith, *That when he hears the ſound of the Trumpet, he tears & bites himſelf.* This will be the work of the mercileſs Tygers of the world, that ſpend their time (in which they ſhould be providing for Eternity) in hunting Gods people, and taking their pleaſures; and it may be think to be a little more mild before they die; but of a ſudden the Trumpet ſounds, away, away, and O then what a lamentable taking are they in! how do they wiſh for time again, or that they had ſpent that which they had better? Wicked men never knew the worth of time, till they come to a Death-bed, or a while after. O then, they that made nothing of ſpending thirty or fourty years, would lay down all they are worth for one year, one month, one day, one hour, but it's then too late. O how do they gnaſh their

teeth!

teeth! with what horrour do they think of paſt mercies, and future miſeries! Men fear generally that Death will come ſooner than they would have him; they bewail that their lives are ſhort at the longeſt; whereas if men would wiſely husband that time that God hath given them, it would be long enough: O happy is that man that hath done his great Work before his Sun is ſet? O fooliſh men that complain of God for making their lives ſo ſhort, and complain not at all of themſelves for making them ten times ſhorter: For moſt men lives not at all the life of Religion, and may be called Dead. Others have a name to live, and yet are little better than the former. Moſt that live ſpiritually, begin their life after they have been many years dead: & though we ſit and condemn others as guilty of great imprudence in theſe affairs, yet, how do we at the ſame time juſtifie them, by being as profuſely expenſive of precious time as they? O where's the man almoſt to be found, that doth improve time to as good advantage as he ſhould? Among other Symptomes of a fool, this is none of the leaſt, *To be always beginning to live.* What an unhandſome ſight is it to ſee an old man learning his Letters? O remember man thou haſt a great work to do! O remember thy precious time runs away with an unſpeakable ſwiftneſs! What do you mean, to ſit with your hands in your boſoms? Look about thee, O ſinner, 'tis not time a day for you to be ſleeping or playing; Methinks a man in your condition ſhould be up and doing with all the diligence that you could for your ſoul, & labouring *to make your calling and election ſure*; methinks we ſhould hear you asking, what you

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ſhall do to get a Pardon for your ſins, to get God reconciled to you. Methinks you ſhould be enquiring what you ſhould do to redeem your time, & to ſpend every moment of it ſo to the beſt advantage, as that you may appear chearfully before your Maſter at night. That I may inforce this weighty Direction, I ſhall propound a few ſerious Queſtions to you.

Queſt. 1. Do you think that theſe things are neceſſary, or are they not? If they be neceſſary, why do you not mind them ſpeedily? If they be not neceſſary, do not look after them at all.

Queſt. 2. Do you expect to be in a better capacity to look after theſe things hereafter? do you hope for more ſtrength, when you are worn out with ſin and age, when your back begins to bend, and your joynts to ſhake? Do you think you ſhall be more at leiſure, when your work will be much increaſed? Know this, that ſin grows upon you daily, it preys upon your Vitals: He that is not fit to day, will be leſs fit to morrow. As for leiſure, I muſt confeſs you may have leiſure enough in another World, to think of theſe things. But I wiſh you well to conſider whether it be great wiſdom to repent in this world, or in another. I would be loath to be repenting in another, it's ſad weeping indeed there, where tears ſhall never be dried up. I have told you oft that God ſaith, to day, and it is both wickedly and fooliſhly done of man to ſay, to morrow. I muſt tell you but ſo, that it is a dreadful hazard that every delaying Sinner doth run: It is a queſtion whether God may not deny his Grace, ſtop the Preachers mouth, ſtop his ears, and ſtop your breath: And where are you then with your to morrow?

morrow? delays in these affairs always cost dear, they have cost many thousands dear already, and if you make no more haste than you have done, they will cost you dear too.

Quest. 3. When would you get acquainted with God? When he hath shut up his door? When would you run this race? When you have lost your legs, or can but creep with Crutches? Is that the best time to do your work in, when it is next to impossible to do it?

Quest. 4. Who deserves best at your hands, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, or God? Resolve me this I pray? Whom do you call your Master? Whom have you most reason to make haste for?

Quest. 5. How would you take it, if any of them which depend upon you, should serve you as you serve God?

Quest. 6. Do you think you can make too much haste? Who is afraid of being Rich too soon? Although a man may with reason good enough be afraid of that which may make his happiness far more uncertain, and his miseries more intolerable. Who fears to make too much haste when his Prince sends for him with speed? O that men did but know, who it is that calls them, and whether they are going, and what they have to do, when they come to their journies end?

Quest. 7. Are you sure you shall live till you are an hour older? You are strong and healthful it may be, but did you never hear that such have with a very little warning? Have you never known a man well one hour, and dead the next? If you have not, I tell you of one now, that was very

very well one moment, and dead the next, my ſelf being an eye-witneſs of it. It's poſſible there may be but one ſmall moment between a ſtrong working healthful man, and a breathleſs Corps.

Queſt. 8. What do you think will become of you, I ask again, if you put off till it be too late?

Queſt. 9. What would you do, if you were ſure you ſhould dye, or the day of Judgment come before you were a week older?

Queſt. 10. Do you think to get acquainted with God in another world, when you do not mind him here? Will God think you own them hereafter, that diſown him here? Will he know them in Heaven, who would not know him upon the Earth?

XI. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of thoſe things, which keep God and man at a diſtance, and make the Lord take no pleaſure in us. In general, take heed of all ſin, *Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do good, ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the Fatherleſs, and plead the cauſe of the Widow. Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord,* Iſa. 1. 17, 18. You muſt waſh your hands in Innocency, if you intend to compaſs his Altar, to ſit down at his Table. In *Pſal.* 101. *David* is exceeding deſirous of Gods company, and he cries out, *O when wilt thou come unto me!* he thinks long to have a viſit from his old friend; he would gladly walk with him. Now what courſe doth he take to get Gods com-

company? Why, he goes the beſt way to work in the world: He will ſet no wicked thing before his eyes. He knows it is to no purpoſe for him to expect much of Gods company, while he doth entertain his greateſt enemies; therefore he turns them out of doors; I hate, ſaith he, the works of them that turn aſide, it ſhall not cleave to me; And that God may dwell with him, and make his houſe, as well as his heart, a Temple for himſelf, he will not ſuffer a wicked perſon to live in it, he will have none in his Family, but ſuch as ſhall be ready to ſerve God, and bid this his great Friend welcome.

But more particular, if you would have much of Gods company, and be intimately acquainted with him; take heed more eſpecially of thoſe particular ſins which make God moſt to eſtrange himſelf from. As,

Firſt, Take heed of Pride: That was the ſin which made the firſt breach between the Creature and the Creator, the ſin that ſunk the Angels, that made God and them, who were very good Friends once, to be bitter enemies; this hath made the breach infinite, the feud everlaſting, the wound incurable. And this made the firſt Quarrel between God and man. When man thinks himſelf too good to be but a man, he muſt be a God; he quickly is too bad to be a man, he is but one remove from the Devil. To be a favourite of his Prince is not enough, except he may ſtep into the Throne; it's therefore high time for his Prince to remove ſuch from his preſence to a Priſon, from the Court to a Dungeon. It was Pride that caſt *Adam* out of Paradiſe; and do you think that that ſin is leſs hateful to God

God, and leſs dangerous to man than it was five thouſand years ago? Did it then ſpend all it's poyſon? And can it now do no harm? Do you believe that God will take that into his boſome now that formerly he abhorred to look upon? Now ſin hath increaſed it's ſtrength and deformity, and heightened it's enmity againſt the infinite Majeſty of the holy *Jehovah*, ſhall his hatred againſt it decreaſe? will he be more willing to accompany proud aſpiring Rebells now than then? no ſuch matter: God is ſtill as holy as ever, and hates all ſin, eſpecially pride as much as ever. Do you think that it is for nothing that the word of God ſpeaks ſo much againſt this ſin? Can it be that the Holy-ghoſt would ſay, *Prov.* 11. *That every one that is proud, is an abomination to the Lord*, except God did indeed hate them? Why ſhould God threaten ſuch ſo much, if he took any pleaſure in their Society? *though hand joyn in hand, yet the proud ſhall not go unpuniſhed. Now we call the proud happy, but ſhall we call him ſo, when the day of the Lord ſhall burn as fire, and all the proud ſhall be as ſtubble: And the day that cometh ſhall burn them up, ſaith the Lord, and it ſhall leave them neither root nor branch. When the Lord ſhall tread down the wicked, and they ſhall be like Aſhes under his feet*, *Mal.* 3. 15. & 4. 1, 3. There is not one proud man in Heaven, I am ſure: Nor a proud man upon the Earth, that ſhall have much of Gods acquaintance. And let me ſay, he that ſets himſelf above God (for that's the Pride I mean) whileſt he ſtands in that ſtate, muſt never expect that God ſhould look upon him with any kindneſs. Heaven and Hell will as ſoon be agreed, as God and ſuch a one ſhall be united. The

proud now overlook others that are their betters, and ſcorn their Maker; but ſhortly they ſhall be paid in their own coyn, they ſhall be ſcorned too. If all the proud *Nimrods*, *Pharaohs* and *Belſhazzars* in the world ſhould enter into a League, and combine againſt the Almighty, and ſay, they will caſt away his Cords from them, and that they will never debaſe their noble Spirits ſo low as to ſtoop to his commands; yet none of them all ſhall go unpuniſhed: They ſhall be like ſtubble before the devouring flames, and like Chaffe before a mighty whirlwind: God is not afraid of their big looks, *Prov.* 21.4. *Prov.* 6.17. *Prov.* 15. 25. *Iſa.* 2. 12. *Luke* 1. 51. *Jam.* 4. 6. God will cloath himſelf with vengeance, and the mighty *Jehovah* will gird his weapon upon his thigh, and march out in fury and Indignation, and draw his glittering Sword, and reſiſt the proud, and teach them what it is to bid defiance to the Lord of Hoſt. We ſhall ſoon ſee, who ſhall be uppermoſt, God or they. And when the proud ſinner lies conquered at his feet, how doth he with infinite ſcorn look upon him, and ſay, behold, the man is become like one of us! This 'tis for man to attempt the dethroning of the Almighty! But it may be, moſt may think themſelves little concerned in that which I now ſpeak; wherefore I muſt add this one word. Be it known unto thee, O man, whoſoever thou art, that think'ſt thou haſt no pride; I am ſure thou art one of thoſe that are in that black Roll which have proclaimed War againſt Heaven; thou art the man that ſhall never be acquainted with God whilſt thou art in that mind. It may be thou maiſt ſpeak Peace to thy ſelf for all this, and

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flatter thy ſelf as if God and you were Friends; but let me tell thee, I come with heavy tydings in my mouth to thee: If thou turn not, he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his Bow, and made it ready, he hath prepared for thee the Inſtruments of death, the day of thy Calamity is near: The dreadful *Jehovah* is upon his march; and if you ask me whether there be not Peace for thee, I anſwer as *Jehu* did to *Jehoram*, what peace, O haughty ſinner, ſo long as the pride of thy heart is ſo great, and thy Rebellions againſt thy Maker ſo many? There is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked. Wherefore as you value your Soul, as you tender your everlaſting Salvation, and deſire to be owned by the Lord in the day of your diſtreſs, take heed of pride. Go quickly, and humble your ſelf, and make ſure your Friend; labour to pull down every high Thought, and every proud Imagination; and let your Arrogant Spirit bow before the mighty God, there is no way will do but this; as ye have already heard: You muſt ſet the Crown upon the Lords head, you muſt lay your ſelves at his feet, and lick the very duſt. Your betters have done ſo before you, and have thought it their honor to lye at the feet of Chriſt; this they look'd upon (as with good reaſon too) as the firſt ſtep to preferment. If therefore you would be acquainted with God, take heed of pride.

Secondly, Take heed of a worldly mind. What concord is there between Earth and Heaven? What agreement between God and the World? What delight can his Holineſs take in him, who had rather be wallowing in the Mud, and treading of Clay, then bathing himſelf in

Divine contemplation; that thinks it higher preferment to ſit by his bags of Gold, then to ſtand in the preſence of his God: a greater happineſs to be rich, than to be holy; that had much rather be in a Fair, Market, or Exchange, getting money, than with his God, getting Pardon, Grace and Heaven. How pregnant is the Scripture of proofs for the evidencing of this truth? to name one or two of a hundred, *Rom.* 8. 7. *To be carnally minded is enmity againſt God: For it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can it be.* What do you ſay to this Scripture? Thoſe which walk with God, live in the world, and yet they live above the world; they all look for a City that hath foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God. It was not for nothing that the Apoſtle *John* layes ſo ſtrict a charge upon thoſe which he wrote to, *That they ſhould not love the world, nor the things of the world: For if any love the world, the love of the Father is not in them,* 1 *John* 2. 15. Whence is it that ſo few great ones go to Heaven, and that it is next to impoſſible for ſuch to be ſaved? Is it not becauſe they have choſen *Mammon* for their Friend, rather than God? He hath their heart, their Love, their Time, their Service, and they have little to ſpare for God, & therefore God hath but a little happineſs, a little heaven, a ſhort glory for them; they ſhall have but a little of his ſweet company, little Acquaintance with him. Why doth *James* ſpeak ſo terribly to the rich men, & bid them go, and weep and howl? was it not becauſe their riches were like to undoe them? Did the wealthy man in the Parable live ever the longer for his riches, or fare ever the better for his greatneſs, when he came into another world? There is no

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queſtion but he might have more flatterers; there is no doubt but he hath more worldly Friends; but bring me a man upon the Earth, that lets his heart without controle fly upon the world, cleaves to it, and takes it to be his beſt friend, that knows God, that's acquainted with his Maker, that prizeth his Redeemer. It was a wiſe man, who ſaid, that it's abſolutely impoſſible to mind externals and internals, this world and another, with earneſtneſs at the ſame time: but it was wiſdom it ſelf who ſaid, *That no Servant can ſerve two Maſters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other; he cannot ſerve God and Mammon, Mat.* 5. 24. &c.

3. Take heed of Hypocriſie. Who are the perſons that God doth denounce his dreadful threatnings againſt? Are they not ſuch as honour him with their Lips, when their Hearts is far from him? With what Abhorrency doth he look upon ſuch, and all that they do? *Iſa.* 1. They never bring their heart to viſit God with, and therefore they have little reaſon to expect that he ſhould bring his Dainties to entertain them with.

4. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of being acquainted with wicked company. We read that many wicked men have fared the better for the company of the godly; but we ſcarce ever heard that any godly man ever fared the better for being in the company of the wicked, except they went on Gods Errand amongſt them. This is clear in the caſe of *Lot*, who firſt loſt his goods, and was made a Captive by being in *Sodom*; and though they were reſtored to him

again for a while, (one would have thought that ſhould have been a fair warning how he came again into ſuch company) yet becauſe that would not do, a while after you may read how dear *Lot* paid for dwelling in *Sodom*. Poor man ! he loſt all that he had, and was fain to fly away without either Flocks or Herds, and little more than his cloathes on his back ; and that which was more ſad, to leave ſome of his own dear Relations behind him, roaſting in thoſe diſmal flames. Whereas had he never come to *Sodom*, or upon the ſight of their wickedneſs ſpeedily left them, it had been much better with him in many reſpects. *Jehoſaphat* fared never the better for joyning in affinity with his wicked Neighbours, it had like to have coſt him his life. But were it, only loſs of Temporals that a man hazarded by ſuch ſociety, the danger were not ſo conſiderable ; but the peril is greater than ſo, for by it they make God ſtand at a diſtance ; they muſt never look to have ſuch company, and Gods company both together ; I mean, when they do unneceſſarily or delightfully converſe with God. If therefore you intend to be acquainted with God, you muſt not have them always in your company whom he hates, and which hate him, and will labour all they can to cool your affections towards him. Wherefore, be ye not unequally yoaked with unbelievers : For, what Fellowſhip hath Righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs ? And what communion hath light with darkneſs ? And what concord hath Chriſt with *Belial* ? Or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel ? And what agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols ? For ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath ſaid,

I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people; wherefore come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye ſhall be my Sons and Daughters, ſaith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. 6. 14. to the end. But I would not here be miſtaken, as if I would commend an ungodly proud ſeparation from all that are not juſt of our mind; or as if a man ought to have nothing at all to do with wicked men; no, no: Every one ought to do what he can in his place for the good of Souls. O that Chriſtians would thus converſe more with their poor, ignorant, carnal, Chriſtleſs neighbours! O that they would thus be more acquainted with the wicked, and then they ſhould have never the leſs of Gods company, but the more; but it is an unneceſſary delightful aſſociating of our ſelves with them that I mean, eſpecially ſuch of them which will ſtifle every ſpiritual diſcourſe, and divert you from any thing that tends to the promoting of the intereſt of Religion; and ſuch as have frequently expreſſed their deteſtation of the way of Holineſs, and make but a mock at your ſerious Counſels, ſtop their ears to wholſome Advice, or make ſome undecent reflections upon the ſtrict profeſſion of godlineſs; ſuch as labour to make you believe that all Religion, but that which will conſiſt with their wickedneſs, is but a Fanſie. As for ſuch as thoſe, abhor their company, fly from them as thoſe that have the plague, the marks of death are upon them, and you may write *Lord have mercy upon us* upon their doors, but go not in, leſt you be Infected.

5. If

5. If you would be acquainted with God, take heed of unbelief. Unbelief will make your ſoul depart from God, and God quite to depart from your ſoul. This, This is one of thoſe dreadful and God-eſtranging ſins, which leads on whole Legions againſt the Almighty. This is that bold daring ſin which gives Truth it ſelf the lye, and ſaith, That the Word of God is falſe, his Promiſes airy, his Threatnings but a Wind: But know this, O ſinner, ſuch a wind they be, that will riſe to a dreadful ſtorm, and turn your ſtrong confidence up by the roots, and blow them into Hell, if you make no more of them than you do.

6. If you would be acquainted with God, beware of ſenſuality. To be ſenſual and deviliſh are near akin. To be lovers of pleaſures and haters of God, are uſually concomitants; in a word, to fare deliciouſly every day, and to be deſpiſed of God, are no ſtrange things. But I wave the further proſecution of theſe things, becauſe they are ſo largely and excellently handled already by ſo many of our brave Worthies. See Mr. *Baxters Saints Reſt*, and *R. A.* his *Vindicia Pietatis*.

XII. DIRECTION.

If you would be acquainted with God, reſolvedly and freely give up your ſelf to him, and enter into a moſt ſolemn Covenant with him. And here I ſhall make bold with that Reverend Author which *R. A.* doth mention in his *Vindicia Pietatis*, and preſent you again with that excellent Form with the preparatories to it, which I have lately met with in the forementioned Author. After

your

your moſt ſerious addreſſes to God, and after a deliberate conſideration of the terms of this Covenant; and after a thorow ſearch of your own heart, whether you either have already, or can now freely make ſuch a cloſure with God in Chriſt, as you have been exhorted to: And when you have compoſed your ſpirits into the moſt ſerious frame poſſible, ſuitable to a tranſaction of ſo high a nature, Lay hold upon the Covenant, and reply upon his promiſe of giving grace and ſtrength, whereby you may be enabled to perform your promiſe. Reſolve in the next place to be faithful, having engaged your hearts, and opened your mouths, and ſubſcribed with your hands to the Lord; reſolve in his ſtrength never to go back. And being thus prepared, and ſome convenient time being ſet apart for the purpoſe, ſet upon the work, & in the moſt ſolemn manner poſſible, as if the Lord were viſibly preſent before your eyes; fall down on your knees, and ſpreading forth your hands towards Heaven, open your hearts to the Lord in theſe or the like words.

O moſt dreadful God; for the Paſſion of thy Son, I beſeech thee accept of thy poor Prodigal, now proſtrating himſelf at thy door; I have fallen from thee by mine Iniquity, and am by Nature a Son of Death, and a thouſand fold more the Child of Hell by my Wicked Practiſe; but of thine infinite Grace thou haſt promiſed Mercy to me in Chriſt, if I will but turn to thee with all my Heart: Therefore upon the Call of the

Goſpel

Gospel I am now come in, and throwing down my Weapons, submit my self to thy mercy. And because thou requirest as the Condition of my Peace with thee, that I should put away mine Idols, and be at defiance with all thine Enemies, which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against thee; I here from the bottome of mine Heart renounce them all, freely covenanting with thee, not to allow my self in any known Sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the Death and utter Destruction of all my Corruptions; And whereas I have formerly inordinately and Idolatriously let out my Affections upon the World, I do here resign my heart to thee that madest it; Humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty, that it is the firm Resolution of my Heart, and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practice this my Resolution, through thy Assistance, to forsake all that is dear unto me in this World, rather than to turn from thee to the ways of sin; And that I will watch against all its Temptations, whether of Prosperity or Adversity, lest they should withdraw my Heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the Temptations of Satan, to whose suggestions,

I reſolve, by thy Grace never to yield my ſelf a Servant. And becauſe mine own Righteouſneſs is but menſtruous Rags, I renounce all Confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of my ſelf a hopeleſs, helpleſs undone Creature, without righteouſneſs or ſtrength. And for as much as thou haſt of thy bottomleſs Mercy offered moſt graciouſly to me wretched ſinner, to be again my God through Chriſt, if I would accept of thee; I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that I do here ſolemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God, and with all poſſible Veneration, bowing the Neck of my Soul under the Feet of thy moſt Sacred Majeſty, I do here take thee the Lord Jehovah, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, for my Portion, and chief good, and do give up my ſelf, Body, and Soul for thy Servant; promiſing and vowing to ſerve thee in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the dayes of my life.*

And ſince thou haſt appointed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the only means of coming unto thee, I do here upon the bended Knees of my Soul, accept of him as the only new and living way, by which ſinners may have acceſs to thee; and do here ſolemnly joyn my ſelf in a Marriage Covenant to him.

O bleſſed Jeſus, I come to thee hungry and

hardly

hardly beſtead, poor, and wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and naked, a moſt loathſome polluted wretch, a guilty condemned Malefactor unworthy for ever to waſh the feet of the Servants of my Lord, much more to be ſolemnly Married to the King of Glory; But ſince ſuch is thine unparall'd Love, I do here with all my power accept thee for my Head and Husband, for better for worſe, for richer for poor, for all times and conditions, to Love and Honour, and Obey thee before all others, and this to the Death. I embrace thee in all thy Offices, I renounce mine own worthineſs, and do here avow thee to be the Lord my righteouſneſs; I renounce mine own wiſdom, and do here take thee for mine only Guide; I renounce mine own will, and take the will for my Law.

And ſince thou haſt told me that I muſt ſuffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee, to take my Lot as it falls with thee, and by thy Grace aſſiſting, to run all hazards with thee, verily ſuppoſing, that neither life nor death ſhall part between thee and me.

And becauſe thou haſt been pleaſed to give me thy Holy Law, as the rule of my life, and the way in which I ſhould walk to thy Kingdom; I do here willingly put my Neck under thy Yoke, and ſet my ſhoulders to thy Burden,

and

and ſubſcribing to all thy Laws, as Holy, Juſt, and Good; I ſolemnly take them as the rule of my Words, Thoughts, and Actions: Promiſing, that though my fleſh contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavour to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction, and will not allow my ſelf in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only becauſe through the frailty of my fleſh, I am ſubject to many failings, I am bold humbly to proteſt, that unhallowed miſcarriages contrary to the ſetled bent and reſolution of my heart, ſhall not make void this Covenant; for ſo thou haſt ſaid.

Now Almighty God, ſearcher of hearts, thou knoweſt that I make this Covenant with thee this day, without any known guile, or reſervation; beſeeching thee, that if thou eſpieſt any flaw or falſhood herein, thou wouldeſt diſcover it to me, and help me to do it a right.

And now glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I ſhall be bold from this day forward, to look upon thee as my God and Father, That ever thou ſhouldeſt find out ſuch a way for the recovery of undone ſinners. Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who haſt loved me, and waſhed me from my ſins in thine own Blood, and art now become my

Sa-

Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to thee, O God the Holy Ghoſt, who by the finger of thine Almighty power haſt turned about my Heart from ſin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, *the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, thou art now become my Covenant-Friend, and I through thine infinite Grace, am become thy Covenant-Servant.* Amen. So be it. *And the Covenant which I have made on Earth, let it be ratified in Heaven.*

The Concluſion.

AND now my Work is done, I muſt leave you; and whether I ſhall ever ſpeak to you, or ſee you, or write to you again while the world ſtands, I know not: My body is frail, and I am a poor dying man, and before it be long, my mouth will be more ſtopped than it is, and yours too: And therefore it's high time for us to look about us. As for my part, I have with all the ſeriouſneſs that I could for my ſoul, ſpoke to you, about the great and weighty affairs of your Souls and Eternity. I again call Heaven and Earth to witneſs, that I have ſet Life and Death before you; I have in the Name of my great Maſter been woing of you to accept of his Son for your Lord and Husband; himſelf for your God, Father and Friend. I have told you what the Lord doth require of them that would be in Covenant with him. I have given you a rude Deſcription of him whom I would have you acquainted with.

with. I have told you of ſome of the glorious effects of acquaintance with God. I have told you of the danger of being a ſtranger to God. I have told you how thankfully ſome have cloſed with theſe offers, and how well they like their choice. I have further ſhow'd you what a peaceable ſtate you ſhall be in, immediately upon your Spiritual Alliance with this Great and Noble friend. I have told you alſo of ſome further benefit and good that will come unto you upon your acquaintance with God. I have given you to underſtand how deſirous the Lord is notwithſtanding all that is paſt, to forget and forgive, and to receive you into favour, if you will in good earneſt return to him with ſpeed. I have again and again propounded this match to you, and told you as much as I could well do in ſo ſhort a time, I have ſtayed a great while for an anſwer, I have put the buſineſs forward all that poſſibly I could; becauſe I ſee how fooliſhly and madly you make light of thoſe advantageous offers, that are made to you, I have again and again pleaded with you, as if I were ready to ſtarve, and begging an alms of you; nay, if it had been for my very life, I could not have ſpoke with more earneſtneſs. I have expoſtulated the Caſe with you, and asked you ſeveral weighty Queſtions, and you have not, you cannot anſwer any one of them, but you muſt condemn your ſelf, and by your own confeſſion, you have nothing in the world to ſay againſt the excellency of this friend. And therefore you muſt either ſpeedily come in, upon the invitation, and cloſe with thoſe gracious overtures that are made to you, or you muſt without any reaſon in the world (your ſelf being

Judg) caſt your ſelf away. And in hopes that all that have heard me, will not be ſo mad as to make light of theſe things, but be asking with ſome ſerioufneſs, that great queſtion? How ſhall I do to get acquainted with God? How ſhall I do to get a Friend for my Soul? What ſhall I do to be ſaved? I have laid down ſome Directions for thoſe that are unfeignedly deſirous to be reconciled to God, I have told them that they muſt labour to be thorowly acquainted with that ſtrangeneſs, and enmity that is in their hearts againſt God; and of the unſpeakable danger of their being ſtrangers to God. I have further directed them that would be acquainted with God to labour to get humble hearts. I have adviſed that they viſit him often, if they would be intimately acquainted with him; & that not in a tranſitory way, but to make a Solemn ſet viſit of it, and to be ſure that they do not forget to get Chriſt along with them. I counſelled them alſo to be much in thoſe places where he is wont to walk; and to get intimately acquainted with ſome of them that know him very well, and will do their beſt to get them to be acquainted with him. I have told you, that if you would be acquainted with God, you muſt kindly entertain, and make much of any Meſſengers that come from him to you; and if men would make ſure work, I deſired them as they loved their Souls that they would follow this great Buſineſs with the greateſt earneſtneſs and ſerioufneſs in the world; and that, what they do, they would do ſpeedily. I informed you what arguments the Scripture puts into our mouths, which we may urge, at the Throne of Grace. I intreated you, for your Souls

ſake to take heed of thoſe things which kept God and man unacquainted; as namely, all ſin in general, but more particularly, Pride, Worldly-mindedneſs, Hypocriſie, delight in wicked company, Unbelief, and Senſuality. Laſtly, I direct all ſuch as would be at peace with God, to give up themſelves to him reſolvedly and freely, in a Solemn Covenant.

And have I been beating the Air all this while? What will you do after all this? What ſhall become of all theſe Sermons? Dare any of you all ſtill be contented to be Unacquainted with God? Can you be very well ſatisfied, after you have heard of ſuch a Friend, to be a ſtranger to him? Can any of you look upon your ſtate as ſafe, while God is your enemy? O how ſhall I leave you, with Hearts full of Enmity againſt your Maker! Alas, alas, poor Hearts! You look very merrily as bad a condition as you are in, but did you but know how neer you are to everlaſting Burnings, I believe it would put a damp upon your Spirits, and ſpoil your Mirth. O how ſhall I leave that poor ſinner, that ſtands as a perſon altogether unconcerned! Whereas death ſtands ready for his Commiſſion, to fetch him away before God; and where are you then? O where are you then, if you come before God as a Stranger? O what ſhall I do for thee? What ſhall I ſay to thee, to prevail with thee! O what arguments will perſwade thee! O, how ſhall we part! Brethren, my hearts deſire is that you may all be ſaved. O that you may all know in this your day, the things of your peace! O that I could mingle all my words with tears! O pitty, pitty, for the Lords ſake, pitty your precious

Souls! O come not here to ask Counſel of God, and then go away, and take the Counſel of the Devil! And what will you yet make light of all the Tenders of the Goſpel? Is Peace, Pardon, Reconciliation, and Acquaintance with God, ſtill nothing with you? Will you for all this take up with a lifeleſs Religion, and never mind a more Spiritual intimate converſe with God? As the Lord liveth, thou ſpeakeſt that word againſt the life of thy Soul. But if thou wilt go on, and deſpiſe God, who can help it? I have told you, and told you again, what the end of theſe things will be. Well once more, I ask thee in the Name of God, wilt thou have God for thy Friend or no? That is, wilt thou love him above all the World? Wilt thou accept him for thy Lord and Husband? Wilt thou be ruled abſolutely by him? Wilt thou lay down thy weapons, and turn on Gods ſide, and fight under his Banner? Wilt thou have Holineſs here, and Happineſs hereafter? One would think, this is a queſtion, that one need not be long a reſolving. Come, come away for the Lords ſake; for your precious Souls ſake, as you would be owned at the day of judgment; as you would rejoyce when moſt of the world ſhall be filled with unſpeakable horror, and perplexity; as you would not hear that heart-rending word from the mouth of the Judge, *Depart, I know you not*, come away, I beſeech you! Come away! O ye my dear Friends, the Cloud hangs over the world, and ere long it will fall with a vengeance. O come out of *Sodom*, linger not for the Lords ſake, leſt the dint of that ſtorm fall upon you. Fire! fire! fire! Awake! awake! awake!

awake! The fire is kindled. What meaneſt thou, O ſinner! if thou ſleepeſt a little longer in that Bed of ſecurity, thou art a dead man, thou wilt be awakened with horror, when thou ſhalt know thy danger, but not know how to avoid it: And do you ſtill ſay? Make haſt! O make haſt, your Glaſs is almoſt out, your time almoſt ſpent, and death is haſtning apace upon you; I ſpeak it again, make haſte, come away, I can't, I can't hold my peace. How can I endure to ſee the ruine of thy Soul, and ſay nothing! O follow thoſe Directions which I have given thee out of the Scripture! Seek the Lord while he may be found, and with all poſſible ſpeed, ſeriouſneſs, and gratitude, accept of his kindneſs, while you may. Methinks ſome of your hearts ſeem to be affected; methinks your countenances ſpeaks you to have ſome thoughts of returning; ſome of you look like perſons almoſt reſolved to ſet upon this great work. O that it may not be almoſt, but altogether! Speak in ſuch Language as this to your own Souls. What meaneſt thou, O my Soul, thus to ſtand Diſputing? Is this a time for thee to ſtand ſtill, as if thou hadſt nothing to do? Hark, how the King of Glory calls! Hear how his Meſſengers invite you! Conſider how long they have ſtood waiting for thee! And ſhall they go away without thee? O fooliſh Heart and unwiſe; wilt thou anſwer all theſe Gracious Offers with a flat denial? Or that which is little better, wilt thou put off all Gods Meſſengers with ſome ſorry excuſes? Awake, O my Soul, and look about thee! How can'ſt thou refuſe when Mercy calls? How

canſt thou deny when Kindneſs it ſelf asks, intreats, beſeecheth thee ? Awake for ſhame, up and put on thy Wedding Garments ! O that this mind might be in you always ! O that thou wert up and ready ! And then happy were the day wherein thou wert born ; then happy were the day that ever you heard of a Chriſt, of Acquaintance with God, and Reconciliation with your Maker. O then how glorious ſhouldeſt thou be for ever ! I rejoyce to ſee the day of thy Marriage a coming ; when thy Lord and Husband ſhall bring thee home in the greateſt State, and in infinite Glory to his own Houſe, where thou ſhalt ſit like a Queen for ever and ever. Behold his Harbingers are coming ! Behold how many Meſſengers the Lord hath ſent to prepare his way ! Awake, O *Zion*, and put on thy beautiful Garments ! Riſe up, O Royal Bride, and put on thy Princely Robes ! Cloath thee with the Sun, and put the Moon under thy feet. Go out and meet the King thy Husband. Behold, O *Jacob*, the Waggons of *Joſeph* are coming ! Behold, O daughter of *Zion*, the Chariots, the Chariots of thy King and Husband are a coming ! They are a coming ! O why doth not thy Heart leap within thee ! O why do not thy ſpirits even faint for gladneſs ! Why doſt thou not ſay, It is enough, I will go out and meet my Lord before I die ? When will the Sun be up ! When will the day break ! When, O when will the ſhadows fly away ! I will get me up to the Mountains of Myrrhe, to the Hills of Frankincenſe. I am travelling for *Zion*, my face is towards *Jeruſalem* ; who will aſcend the Holy Hill with me ? Who

will

will bear me company to my Husband's Houſe? Let us go up to the Lords Houſe; come away, the Sun is riſen, the ſhadows are flying away, thouſands are gone already. Let *Barzillai* and *Chimham*, old and young too, go along with the King of *Jeruſalem*. Come from the Highways and Hedges, come with your Wedding Garments, come quickly and he will make you welcome. The King hath ſent to invite us to a Feaſt, a Feaſt of fat things, of Wines on the Lees well refined. Come, for the Table is ſpread, all things are ready, and his Servants ſtay for us. And will God entertain ſuch Creatures as we are? And will the Lord open his Doors to ſuch loathſome Beggars? Will the Father receive ſuch Prodigals! Return then unto thy reſt, O my Soul, for the Lord will deal bountifully with thee. Who is that which I ſee coming in the Field? Who is this that comes from the Wilderneſs? That comes to meet us? Hark! methinks I hear the Trumpet ſounding: Hark! what's the matter! How do the Mountains eccho! How doth the Air ring again! What noiſe is that which I hear! What glorious Train is that which I ſee! Whence do they come, and whither do they go? It is my Maſter's Son (dear Soul) thy Lord and Husband with his Royal Attendants. Behold he comes! He comes apace! Leaping upon the Hills, Skipping upon the Mountains. He is coming! he is coming! he is even at the door! Ere long thou ſhalt ſee the Mountains covered with Chariots and Horſes of Fire; the Earth will tremble and ſhake; the Heavens and the Earth will be all on a Flaming Fire; the King of

Glory

Glory will come, riding upon the Wings of the wind, accompanied with Millions of his Saints and Angels; He is coming, he is at the door. Go vail thy face; alight and meet thy Husband. He will bring thee into his Fathers Palace, and thou ſhalt be his Wife, and he will love thee for ever: And thou ſhalt remember thy Widdowhood no more. *Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, come quickly.* Amen, Amen.

FINIS.

11 AP 65